Foiled NPA arms shipments came from Hainan,China

Story below, Col. I

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Camacho says gov't in a fiscal crisis** BUSINESS/B1
- **2 DOJ acting secretaries** NEWS/A3
- **Aetas hit Army's rights 'violations'** ACROSS/A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Don't turn kids into 'sex bombs'!

DRESSING up small girls in skimpy attire and egging them to do "sexually" suggestive dance moves are not the kind of talent numbers Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman would approve of in

DON'T/ A7

PARANG SA CAGE DANCERS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, December 11, 2003 ★★ 58 pages / 6 sections / vol. 19 / no. 3 P15 website: www.inq7.net

Traders want Noli to prevent FPJ win

Ed Espiritu says only De Castro can beat actor

By Margie Quimpo-Espino and Christine Avendaño

THE PRESIDENTIAL race is getting increasingly crowded. Now, there's Sen. Noli de Castro.

Though De Castro denied yesterday he has decided to run for president, his good friend, Ambassador to the Court of St. James and former Finance Secretary Edgardo B. Espiritu, confirmed to the INQUIRER that early last month De Castro asked him if he would support him should he run for the presidency.

"I told him we will talk about it," Espiritu said during a long-distance interview with the INQUIRER. "But I will not be surprised if he runs. He is enjoying good ratings."

The senator said that he would announce his decision whether he would run for higher office "very soon."

He pointed out that he had until Jan. 2 to make the announcement, the deadline for filing of candidacies in the May 2004 national election.

But De Castro conceded that there are talks going on regarding his political plans but he could not talk about it.

Espiritu disclosed that many businessmen had called him asking him to urge De Castro to run for the presidency.

"The perception of many businessmen, who include bankers and accountants, is that Noli is the only one who can beat FPJ," said Espiritu, who was former president of the Philippine National Bank during the Aquino administration and finance secretary of ousted President Estrada.

TRADERS/ A11

KOALISYON NG NAGKAKAISANG PILIPINO
K N P
LABAN

BUT WHERE'S the nominee? FPJ is a mere disembodied voice on the speaker phone at his proclamation as the "united opposition's" standard-bearer. From left, Rep. Joaquin Chipeco, Juan Ponce Enrile, Sen. Tito Sotto, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Horacio Morales. Some of the other political personalities behind are Jinggoy Estrada, Mike Romero, Sen. Gregorio Honasan and Mel Lopez. JESS YUSON

FPJ no-show at his proclamation

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE MAN of the hour, Fernando Poe Jr., wasn't even around when he was officially named standard-bearer of the "united opposition" for the May national elections.

And the wildly popular actor has yet to accept the honor.

Poe, known as FPJ or Da King, was not even around when the newly formed Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino proclaimed him yesterday as its presidential candidate although he was able to speak by phone to his more than 1,000 supporters gathered at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati.

"*At sa lalong madaling panahon ay ipaalam ko sa inyo ang aking tugon* (And as soon as possible, I will inform you, what my response is)," Poe said through a phone patch after Sen. Vicente Sotto III called him up.

At one point of his very brief message, his

FPJ/ A8

Roxas quits post to run for Senate, to enjoy son

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Michelle V. Remo

ON HIS FIRST day as a private citizen today, erstwhile Trade Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II will watch his 10-year-old son perform in a school play.

"One of the first things I will be able to enjoy (after resigning) is watching him perform in his school Christmas play (today)," Roxas said yesterday. The bachelor scion of the Araneta-Roxas clan said he resigned from the Cabinet to run for a Senate seat.

Roxas, 46, acknowledged that he was a father to Paolo Gerardo when a television reporter asked him about a blind item about him having a son.

"I don't consider any reportage pertaining to my son as mudslinging. He's a joy, and a blessing," said Roxas, grandson of the late President Manuel Roxas. "Besides he's not hidden. He's a member

ROXAS/ A8

Robot's leg amputated, thanks docs

By TJ Burgonio and Philip C. Tubeza

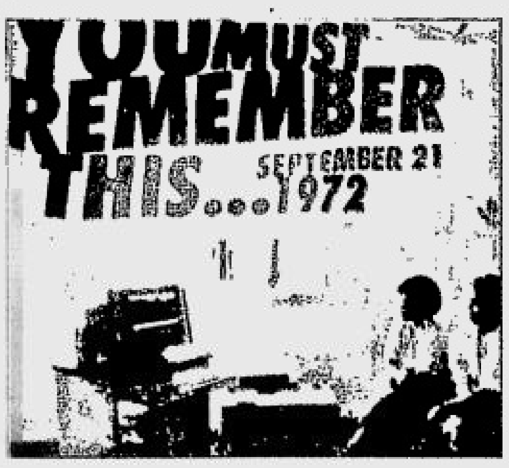
ABU SAYYAF leader Galib Andang aka Commander Robot has lost his left leg but is still grateful to his attending physician.

"Doc, thanks for giving me special attention," Col. Rafael Regino yesterday quoted Andang as saying during a visit to the latter's room at the V. Luna Medical Center in Quezon City at around 7 a.m.

"He was very thankful," the military surgeon-general said at a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo.

Andang's left leg from the mid-thigh down, where he sustained wounds and where very poor blood circulation had been observed, was amputated in an oper-

ROBOT/ A8



UNFORGETTABLE
A dark era in the nation's history is relived on the Wall of Remembrance, on Human Rights Day on Wednesday (above) even as riot police (left) disperse leftist demonstrators marking the meaning of the day by marching toward the Palace. Or so they tried, anyway. AP/JOAN BONDOC

Aventajado: Libyans took part of ransom

By Armand N. Nocum

THE CHIEF hostage negotiator of then President Joseph Estrada yesterday confirmed earlier reports that a total of $25 million was paid to the Abu Sayyaf for the release of its hostages.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Robert Aventajado said $15 million of the $25 million that came from the Libyan government went to his fellow negotiators, former Libyan Ambassador to the Philippines Dr. Abdurazak Rajab Azzarouq and Mohammad Ismail.

He also accused the two men of earning up to P25 million when they had $10 million changed into the local currency.

"Only Azzarouq can explain where the money went. Anyway, it's their money. So why use me as a scapegoat?" Aventajado said.

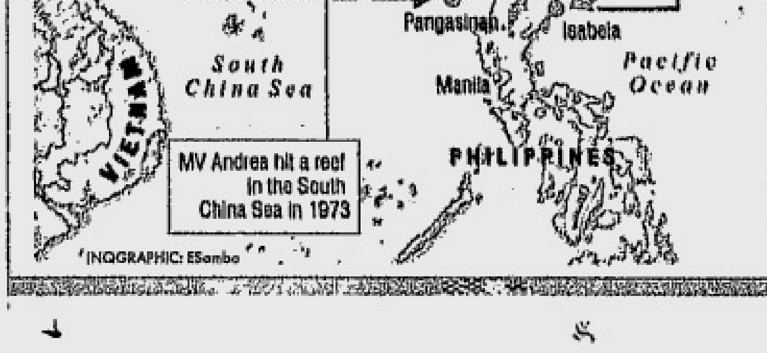
He added: "If $25 million was [the amount that] came through Azzarouq and Mohammad Ismail, where did the rest of the money go? [The amount of] $15 million was a lot for lost change."

Aventajado said there could not have been any way for him and his people to get their hands on the money because they never handled it. He took issue with an earlier INQUIRER report saying he had personally handed the money to Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang, widely known as Commander Robot.

AVENTAJADO/ A8

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

Why NPA arms deal from China failed


CHINA
TAIWAN
Hainan
Sanya
MV Karagatan intercepted by the military in Digoyo Bay, Isabela in 1972
Luzon
Pangasinan
Isabela
South China Sea
Pacific Ocean
Manila
VIETNAM
MV Andrea hit a reef in the South China Sea in 1973
PHILIPPINES
INQGRAPHIC: ESambo

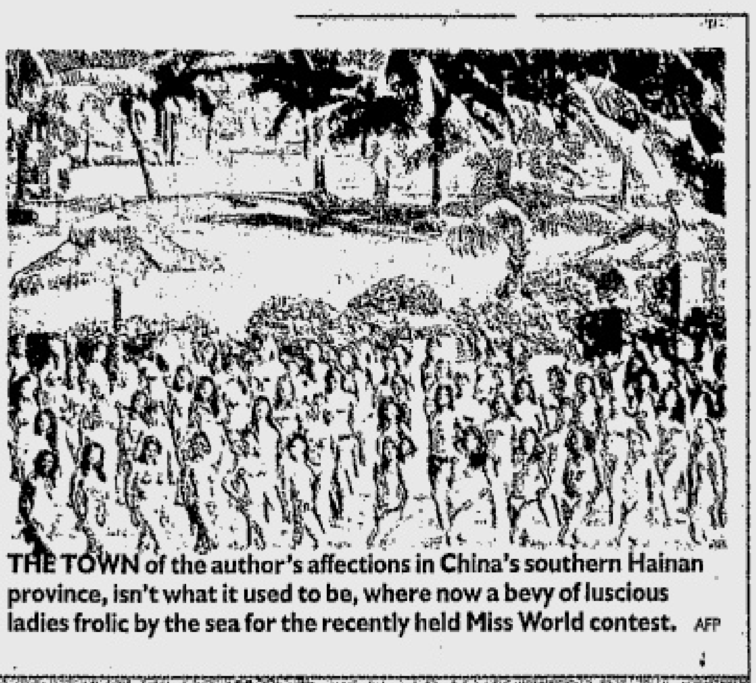
By Ricardo S. Malay
Contributor

(Editor's note: The author was a columnist at the defunct Manila Chronicle and a senior lecturer in journalism at the UP College of Mass Communication. He spent 10 years in China and eight years in the Netherlands during the Marcos dictatorship.)

WHEN I learned that Sanya, Hainan, was hosting this year's Miss World pageant, I took an inventory of my emotions and sighed: What happened to the Sanya of my memories that it had become the staging ground for an annual bourgeois ritual, a decadent orgy celebrating the body beautiful, to borrow from the idiom of political activists? The Sanya I knew where time had stopped and was mired in a strange blend of rusticity and Maoist mysticism?

Let me take you back more than 30 years.

WHY/ A4



THE TOWN of the author's affections in China's southern Hainan province, isn't what it used to be, where now a bevy of luscious ladies frolic by the sea for the recently held Miss World contest. AFP

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with rains while Eastern Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread over Eastern Mindanao.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/11/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Widespread Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

New PNP revamp looms

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE SECOND wave of the controversial top-to-bottom revamp at the Philippine National Police will be announced anytime this week, according to two senior police officials.

The new reshuffle will include the 17 appointments postponed in the initial revamp because of the allegedly intense lobbying with Malacañang by several officials who did not want to be moved, said the officials who declined to be named.

Director Enrique Galang, the newly appointed chief of the directorial staff, however would not confirm the second revamp, saying that making an announcement would be "premature unless there's already an order."

"But the revamp is a regular feature of the PNP. Without it, the PNP will stagnate because no new blood will be infused," he said.

It remains to be seen, however, if the 17 officials would now be willing to assume their new posts.

One of the sources said PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. might be forced to make changes especially after the first part of the revamp triggered so much controversy that led to a demand for his resignation from Director Eduardo Matillano, erstwhile chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, who rejected his new appointment.

Matillano was sacked and placed on floating status. He eventually was appointed chief of the directorate for intelligence and detective management (DIDM) after President Macapagal-Arroyo brokered a reconciliation between him and Ebdane last Friday.

Another controversy in the upcoming revamp involves Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal, a top intelligence official and regional director for Calabarzon whose reassignment to Central Mindanao was one of the 17 appointments put on hold.

Caringal went on mandatory leave after complaining that the PNP leadership seemed unsure as to where to assign him.

"We are professional officers and we should be treated as such. We are not basketballs that could be left bouncing," he told the INQUIRER. He said the affected officials were not consulted about the initial revamp.

A Camp Crame insider said Caringal's transfer was triggered by the intense lobbying of an "official very close to Malacañang" who wanted his man to secure the Calabarzon region.

Caringal, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1975, had said that Ebdane urged him to make a "sacrifice" and accept and the Region 12 post and later offered to appoint him as deputy chief of the National Capital Region Police Office.

But he said he declined the offer because there were still more senior PMA graduates who have been occupying deputy posts at the NCRPO.

"We still respect seniority in the academy," he said.

Still another controversial aspect of the remaining appointments involves Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya, director of the Civil Security Group.

Berroya was supposed to be replaced by Chief Supt. Alfredo de Vera but Ebdane was reportedly forced to retain him in the post indefinitely after he asked Malacañang to spare him in the revamp.

Namfrel finally gets Comelec accreditation

By Martin P. Marfil

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday finally accredited the National Movement for Free Elections as its citizens' arm tasked to conduct a vote count for the May 2004 presidential polls.

The Comelec's decision came after Namfrel distanced itself from one of its officials who had been critical of the poll body and after it expressed support to Comelec's implementation of the nationwide computerized elections.

In a five-page resolution, Comelec accredited Namfrel as the citizens' arm for the "operation vote count" and that it would be given the fourth copy of the election returns and the fourth copy of certificates of canvass, supported by the statements of votes from the city, municipal and provincial districts.

Namfrel will also be allowed to publish the results of the vote count indicating regional breakdowns by provinces and that it shall complement pollwatching efforts by ensuring the potency of the indelible ink and its proper application on voters' fingers on Election Day.

"The purity of elections is one of the fundamental requisites of popular government. The Comelec, by its constitutional mandate, must do everything in its power to secure a fair and honest canvass of votes cast in the elections," the Comelec said, quoting an earlier Supreme Court decision.

"In the performance of its duties, the commission must be given considerate attitude in adopting means and methods that will ensure the accomplishment of the great objective for which it was created—to promote free, orderly honest elections. With the above-quoted declaration coming no less than the highest court of the land in mind, we in the commission find it not only proper but truly necessary to confer the aforesaid additional duties and functions to Namfrel," it added.

Augusto Lagman, chair of the Namfrel's systems committee tasked to design the counting system, had earlier questioned the election modernization program of the Comelec and criticized its bidding process in the procurement of computers to be used in the automated counting of votes.

The Comelec earlier withheld the accreditation of Namfrel, which has conducted "quick counts" in 20 elections since 1986, because of Lagman's statements criticizing the Comelec.

In a letter to Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos the other day, Namfr el chair Jose Concepcion Jr. said the statements of Lagman were made in his "personal capacity" and "were not official statements" and "not reflective" of Namfrel.

GMA hails Inquirer for positive news

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo hailed the INQUIRER's efforts to publish positive reports, saying positive news about the government's efforts was particularly welcome.

"I would like to congratulate you for the innovation of making sure that you have at least one positive story a day," she said in brief remarks when she made a surprise appearance at the INQUIRER's 18th anniversary celebrations on Tuesday night.

The President said good news was important to government officials because they become inspired to work harder when they know that the good things they do is appreciated by people.

Ms Macapagal arrived unannounced at the INQUIRER offices accompanied by Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. and his wife Gina, Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman, Special Projects Secretary Marita Jimenez, Rep. Ace Barbers and Rep. Roque Ablan. *Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Macapagal off today for Japan-Asean summit

TOKYO (via PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo is off to Tokyo today to attend the Asean-Japan Commemorative Summit during which she and nine other leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will sign with Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi a joint action plan for broadening cooperative ties with Tokyo.

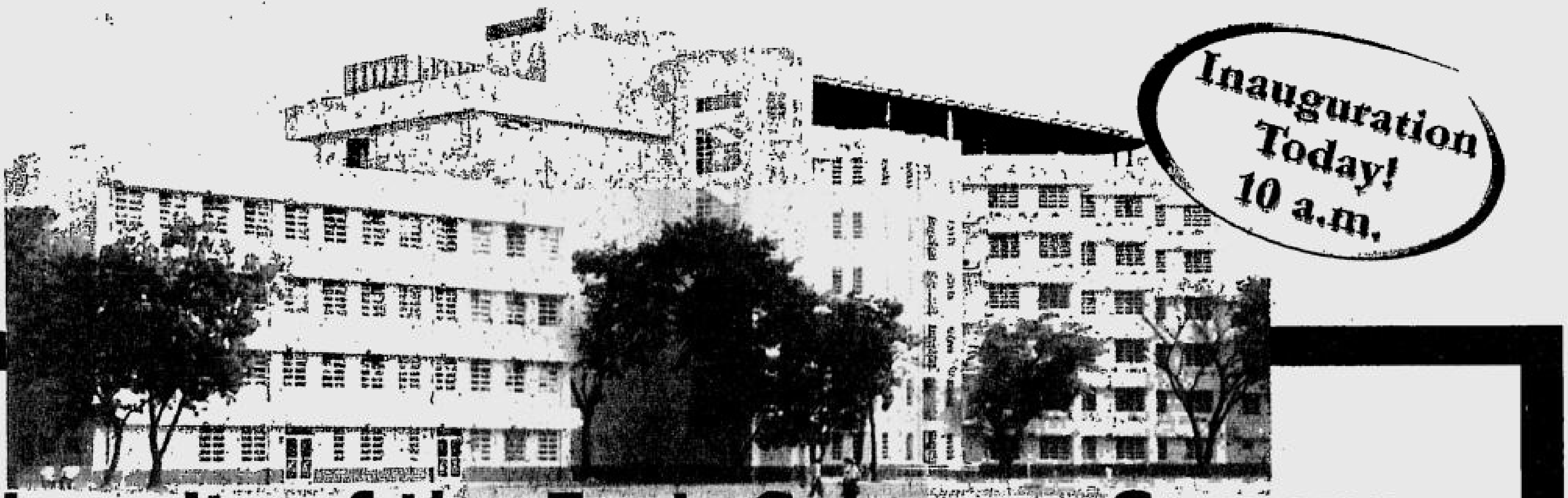
The Asean-Japan Basic Document and Asean-Japan Joint Action Plan are to lay down the "road map" for further cooperation in trade and aid deployment between the 10-nation grouping and Tokyo.

Japan is Asean's second largest trading partner, and its biggest source of investments, tourists and official development assistance.

During the two-day visit, the President will start formal negotiations for an economic partnership agreement with Japan. Thailand and Malaysia are the two other Asean countries mulling an EPA with Japan.

Ms Macapagal is to hold talks with Koizumi this morning and sign several energy agreements.

The President will spend the afternoon at the Imperial Palace with Emperor Hirohito and Empress Michiko. *Gil C. Cabacungan*



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RP awaiting order for Ang extradition

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice is now just waiting for the Nevada district court to issue the extradition order for fugitive businessman Atong Ang, Justice Undersecretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez said yesterday.

"We are still waiting for the final order. We believe that there will no longer be any further hearings," Gutierrez told reporters.

She said the government's evidence in the case has been submitted to the court while Ang's main arguments against his extradition have been dismissed by Judge Lawrence R. Leavitt.

Ang faces plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan, together with his erstwhile friend former President Joseph Estrada, after he allegedly pocketed P130 million worth of tobacco excise taxes from Ilocos Sur.

In his ruling last Nov. 27, Leavitt denied Ang's contention that he could not be extradited because the crime of plunder fails the "dual criminality" requirement of the RP-US extradition treaty.

Ang had claimed that under the "dual criminality" doctrine, he could not be extradited because, unlike the Philippines, the United States has no plunder law. Under the RP-US extradition treaty, a suspect could be extradited if the charge against him is considered criminal under the laws of both countries.

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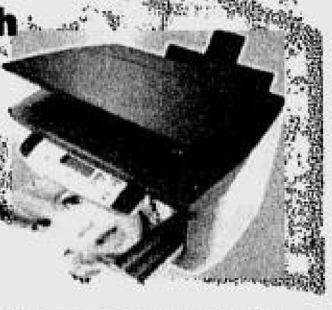

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DOJ has 2 acting secretaries

By Philip C. Tubeza

CONFUSION reigned at the Department of Justice yesterday after it was found that the DOJ virtually had two acting secretaries.

Justice officials were confused who to follow after both Undersecretaries Jose Calida and Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez claimed that they were the rightful acting justice secretary.

Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong is attending a United Nations conference against corruption in Merida, Mexico from Dec. 8 to 13. He is expected to be back on Friday.

Gutierrez said it was Malacañang that designated her as acting secretary while Calida said Datumanong issued a department order designating him to the same position.

The conflicting claims apparently ensued after Datumanong initially recommended to Malacañang that Gutierrez take over but then later forwarded Calida's name to the Palace.

In a letter dated Nov. 11 to President Macapagal-Arroyo, Datumanong designated Gutierrez as acting Secretary during his absence. Malacañang approved Gutierrez's designation six days later.

But in another letter to the Palace dated Dec. 2, Datumanong recommended Calida to take over his place after he learned that Gutierrez was attending a conference in Japan.

"Upon my recommendation, your Excellency previously approved the designation of (Gutierrez) as acting Secretary. However, Undersecretary is presently in Japan, hence there is a need to amend the designation of the Acting Secretary of the Department," Datumanong said.

He then issued a department order naming Calida to his post in acting capacity.

Gutierrez, however, returned to the country on Nov. 28. Malacañang also reiterated her designation as acting secretary on Dec. 8.

"There is confusion among us about who to follow," said one DOJ official.

Ganzon widow vows to fight back

By Raj Padilla,
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO City—The grieving widow of former Sen. Rodolfo Ganzon is in a fighting mood.

Rona Anape-Ganzon, 37, vowed to fight back at her stepchildren who filed a complaint of murder against her and her husband's physician before the Iloilo City prosecutor.

"Mine will be a sweet revenge. They will all get a dose of their own medicine," Rona told the INQUIRER yesterday.

She said she planned to file cases against her stepchildren for libel, grave coercion, grave threats and robbery.

Those who helped sneak her husband's body out of the St. Paul's Hospital will also be charged, she said.

Ganzon died of multiple organ failure last Oct. 29 at the St. Paul's Hospital where he was confined for 17 months. He was 81.

Four hours after his death, the Ganzon children took their father's body out of the hospital without the knowledge of Rona and the hospital authorities.

The children brought their father to the family compound in San Antonio, Molo district, and buried him at the family mausoleum before Rona could secure a court order that would give her full authority over her husband's body.

On Monday, the Ganzon children filed a murder complaint against their stepmother and physician Ricardo Portigo for allegedly refusing to give their father dialysis treatment, which they said could have prolonged his life.

Rona has defended her decision and said she was willing to face the consequences.

"If I were asked again, I would still decide that way. I understand the pain he went through more than any other [person] and I just could not allow myself to see him suffer more," she said.

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Why NPA arms deal from China failed

From page A1

Joma Sison, my ideological mentor during my college days, wanted me to go on a mission to China.

Delivery of weapons

In 1971, the winds of political repression were heralding the grim fate that awaited the Filipino people: martial law. My task was to negotiate the delivery of weapons from China to the New People's Army in anticipation of the rising tide of struggle against the Marcos dictatorship.

After much soul-searching, I accepted the challenge of being part of the solution to a national crisis.

In July that year, I took a French leave from the Manila Chronicle, where I was covering the foreign affairs beat. My wife, Charito, also dropped out of sight from the English classes she was handling at UP Diliman.

Together with our two small children, we slipped into China where we were later joined by Sison's closest associate, Ibarra Tubianosa*.

Our mission was led by Ibarra, with me as deputy head and Charito as secretary. Four activists later joined our group as staff support.

MV Karagatan fiasco

Our first project, hatched in 1972, was to undertake the transfer of arms and ammunition from a Chinese naval base in Swatow to a landing point in Digoyo Bay, Isabela.

The vessel that carried the shipment, MV Karagatan, however, ran afoul of the military in the area.

In the ensuing firefight, the NPA band of Victor Corpus (Ka Eming) that was waiting for the cargo only managed to salvage 200 of the 1,200 M-14 automatic rifles and other auxiliary military equipment Chairman Mao Zedong had approved as China's internationalist aid to the Philippine armed struggle.

Other means

Disappointed with our setback, which the Chinese side also considered as their own, we received word from Joma to explore another means of arms delivery. This time, he proposed that the Chinese prepare a shipment of M-14s encased in plastic bags to be dropped off the Pangasinan coast which would be retrieved by scuba-diving teams.

More elaborate than Karagatan, the plan made it necessary for Ibarra and I to make an inspection trip to a far-flung naval facility.

Flying to Sanya

Four months after the request was made, the two of us were alerted to leave for Hainan, the southern-most island of China whose capital, Sanya, was home to a strategic naval base of the Southern Military Command.

On a snowy December morning in 1973, we boarded a People's Liberation Army plane in the company of senior military officials.

Flanking us on our seats were Admiral Lai, deputy political commissar of the Chinese Navy who was the over-all project officer of the arms transfer, and Army General Ren, chief of the liaison department that linked with revolutionary parties from all over the world.

Lai, a courtly white-haired man with a soft voice, told us he had just finished his stint in the annual refresher course for senior military officers.

"I know how to throw a mean grenade," he boasted with a smile.

Dumplings, green tea

During the flight, two army stewardesses, obviously chosen for their looks, served our party steamed dumplings and fragrant green tea.

After some three hours filled with banter, our plane touched down at the Sanya airport. The pounding heat of the tropical island made us shed our bulky overcoats.

We drove to Sanya City trailed by a convoy of military jeeps.

What we saw beggared description. Ramshackle houses, open sewers, people in tattered clothes, fading revolutionary slogans on billboards—it was a nether place that time cruelly left behind.

A contrast

The naval base was, however, a sight to behold. Within its environs was a compound with charming guest houses and manicured gardens.

It was a favorite vacation haunt of Jiang Qing, Mao's imperious wife and a power in her own right, who in an impulsive fit ordered the coconut trees lining the driveway chopped down lest the coconuts fell on her head.

It was Admiral Lai who told us the story, and we believed him.

Plastic-sealed

The next day was spent at the logistics headquarters where we were briefed by an officer on the painstaking procedures they took to ensure a successful operation.

Laid out before us were piles of plastic-sealed, vacuum-packed M-14s, three in a sack with extra loads of ammunition.

The uncanny similarity to cadavers in body bags wasn't lost to Ibarra and I.

The briefing officer said he spent many a sleepless night figuring out how to wrap the firearms with a special kind of reinforced plastic that could withstand any oceanographic stress and pressure. His team spent days and nights conducting experiments, we were told.

Studying Mao

They finally solved the problem after conscientiously studying the works of Chairman Mao, he said, especially the essays "Serve the People" and "On Contradiction."

Ibarra and I could only nod our approval.

CORPUS, (Ka Eming)

SISON, mentor

BUSCAYNO, (Ka Payat)

Bacchanalian blast

In the evening, our delegation, which was joined by the local top brass, swung into a celebratory mood. We dined on several mouth-watering courses prepared by Sanya's best chefs.

Bottles of the fiery maotai wine were uncorked and consumed amid toasts to the success of China's internationalist aid to the NPA.

Now and then, there were outbursts of army songs with our two stewardesses, glasses in hand, joining in.

What a surprise it was for us to see men of the People's Liberation Army, models of iron discipline in the public eye, having a bacchanalian blast.

Sobering sight

After hours of revelry, I succumbed to the pitfalls of the moment—I had to be carried by four officers to my room.

The next day, we woke up with the effects of maotai beating in our heads.

We left the naval base wearily, but passing through the desolate city of Sanya once again, we began to sober up. We gave the place one lingering look before we drove on to the airport.

As our plane took off for Beijing, Ibarra and I exchanged thumbs-up signs and exclaimed: "Mission accomplished!"

MV Andrea hits reef

But mission accomplished it wasn't to be for Joma's best-laid plan of giving the revolution a badly needed shot in the arm.

MV Andrea, the vessel assigned to take delivery of the armaments, hit a reef in the Pratas Islands of the South China Sea.

During the stranded crew's ordeal, a passing Hong Kong salvage ship, Oriental Falcon, stopped by and made a deal with the 12-man complement, including eight NPA fighters hand-picked by Bernabe Buscayno (Ka Payat). Its skipper agreed to ferry them to Hong Kong in exchange for harvesting the scrap of MV Andrea.

Taiwanese boat

On the same day, an approaching Taiwanese gunboat, for reasons unknown, began firing warning volleys at the two vessels. The guns only fell silent after one of the Oriental Falcon crewmen reached the gunboat by dinghy and convinced the captain that they were just ordinary seafarers.

Bitter setback

The Falcon groaned with the weight of its collected scrap as it transported the Filipinos to Hong Kong. Being illegal entrants, they were thrown behind bars, but after a few days a Chinese Red Cross team came and secured their release.

The Andrea crew was whisked away to a mainland sanctuary.

For the underground resistance, it was another bitter setback to the protracted people's war against the Marcos dictatorship.

Now capitalist showcase

More than three decades later, Hainan has emerged as a modern place hopscotching with the mainland's frenetic rush to become Asia's new economic powerhouse.

Its once seedy and backward capital has become a bustling metropolis of glass-sided skyscrapers looming over swaths of concrete avenues.

Once a poor but proletarian emblem of Maoist China, Sanya has changed into a glittering showcase of capitalist values.

This saddens me grievously.

Saddened

The jury is not yet out as to whether China needs world beauty contests. But I'm an agnostic to the idea of today's Sanya hosting the gaudy Miss World pageant.

Maybe there's a bit of the romantic in me which makes me yearn for the pristine Sanya I connected to in my militant yesteryears.

*(*Ibarra Tubianosa, a Lyceum student activist in the early '60s, died three years ago in his Sorsogon hometown.)*

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Service operators offer help in Naia 3 corruption probe

AIRPORT service operators affected by the Piatco contract to build and operate Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport will actively help the German government in its efforts to find out if German nationals were involved in corruption in the controversial project.

"We want to know who corrupted whom and we believe we have a better chance of finding out who these people are now that the German government has stepped in," said the MIAA-Naia Association of Service Operators (Maso) in a statement.

The group was reacting to reports from Frankfurt that government investigators had searched the headquarters of Fraport AG, the German airport operator and partner of Piatco in connection with reported corruption investigation related to the Naia 3 project.

Maso said it will initially monitor developments and act accordingly.

"If we have to retain German lawyers to intervene for us and send our own representative there and ship our whole folio of documents, we will do that. For now, we will monitor so we will know how best to come into the picture," Maso chair Perfecto Yasay Jr. said.

Maso and Jose Bernas, the lawyer whose petition led to the Supreme Court ruling declaring the Piatco contract null and void had already linked up with Georg Wengert, a minority stockholder of Fraport, who had sued Fraport officials in Frankfurt for the Piatco mess.

Airport fees doubled

AIRPORT fees for domestic flights will be doubled starting next year.

However, Ninoy Aquino International Airport Edgardo Manda said airport charges for the international airport will remain unchanged.

Beginning Jan. 1, passengers flying out of Manila to other airports in the country will have to pay P200, up from the previous P100.

On the other hand, airport charges for international routes is still pegged at P550. *Alcuin Papa*

Book writing justice tackles technology, law in new opus

By Philip C. Tubeza

AFTER his controversial book "Reforming the Judiciary," Supreme Court Justice Artemio Panganiban has published another book, this time about the impact of the most recent developments in science and technology in the application of law and court decisions.

Panganiban's latest opus, titled "The Bio-Age Dawns on the Judiciary," is his seventh book since he became an SC justice in 1995. The book is now available in bookstores at P600.

"Expanding his readership, (Panganiban), for the first time, had his book commercially printed and made readily available to the public in response to the 'unprecedented clamor' for copies of his earlier works," the SC Public Information Office said in a statement.

Panganiban's "Reforming the Judiciary," which included a chapter about the high court's role in the Edsa II uprising which catapulted then Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo to the presidency, became the basis for the impeachment complaint against him, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and six other SC justices.

The book narrated how Davide sought divine guidance through the Bible before deciding to have Ms Macapagal take her oath as President.

Panganiban's new book steers away from the sticky issue of religion and focuses on science and the judiciary, including a chapter on "Judicial Globalization."

In her review of Panganiban's book, Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez said that it "overthrows the conception that the Judiciary is insecure with science" as it "offers a useful perspective on the impact of biosciences on social conduct, human relationship and environment."

Gutierrez said the book presents a "fairly comprehensive account how the Court has faced the globalization trend in different fields, such as economics, politics, elections, human rights, criminal law, enforcement, laor, environment protection and DNA testing."

She also took note of a particularly interesting piece in the book—a fictional case scenario on human cloning, genetic engineering, cell-line development and patenting of genes—which she said would "evoke a web of legal and judicial issues, enough to send every assiduous lawyer to his study."

"The Bio-Age Dawns on the Judiciary is both a personal odyssey of a distinguished magistrate and a beacon of reason in a world awash with technological and scientific breakthroughs... The book is a legacy of a great mind," Gutierrez said.

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PNOC shipping execs face charges over tanker charter

AN ORGANIZATION of domestic petroleum tanker owners has filed graft charges against a retired general and other officers of the PNOC Shipping and Transport Corp. (PSTC), a government owned and controlled corporation, for chartering oil tankers without public bidding.

A complaint-affidavit filed before the Ombudsman by Peter Aguilar, legal counsel of the Philippine Petroleum Sea Transport Association Inc. (Philpesta), alleged that the PSTC chartered three tankers, MV Agoncillo, Bonifacio and Miguel Malvar, without public bidding or under anomalous bidding.

The complaint-affidavit alleged that on or about July 25, 1996 to date, PSTC time-chartered on a back-to-back basis an oil tanker now called MT Felipe Agoncillo from Safeway Maritime Bulkers Inc. apparently without the requisite public bidding.

And from May 24, 2000 until 2006 (72 months), PSTC also time-chartered another vessel, the MT Andres Bonifacio from the same company, also without bidding.

Philpesta also questioned the time charter of MT Miguel Malvar, which, it claimed, was not subjected to the requisite public bidding since it did not receive any notice of bidding.

Named respondents were retired General Cesar F. Tapia, president of PSTC; Norberto A. Corpus, chair of the PSTC Tanker Purchase Committee and several John Does and Mary Does believed responsible for the time charter.

In their counter-affidavit before the office of the Ombudsman, Tapia and Corpus denied the allegations and described the complaint affidavit as "pure lies, fabrication and unfounded conclusions."

They said the complainants used the documents and letters of PSTC to twist the truth. Tapia and Corpus denied any involvement in the chartering of the MT Agoncillo and Bonifacio. They also claimed that the time charter of MT Miguel Malvar, through direct negotiated bidding, followed legal procedures and parameters in bidding and procurement requirements under Executive Orders 40 and 109.

They said Aguilar's allegations that the time charter of the Miguel Malvar did not undergo any public bidding was "totally false."

In response to the counter-affidavit, Philpesta said E.O. 40 and 109 had been repealed with the effectivity of RA 9184, which took effect on Jan. 1, 2003 or five months before the negotiated bidding.

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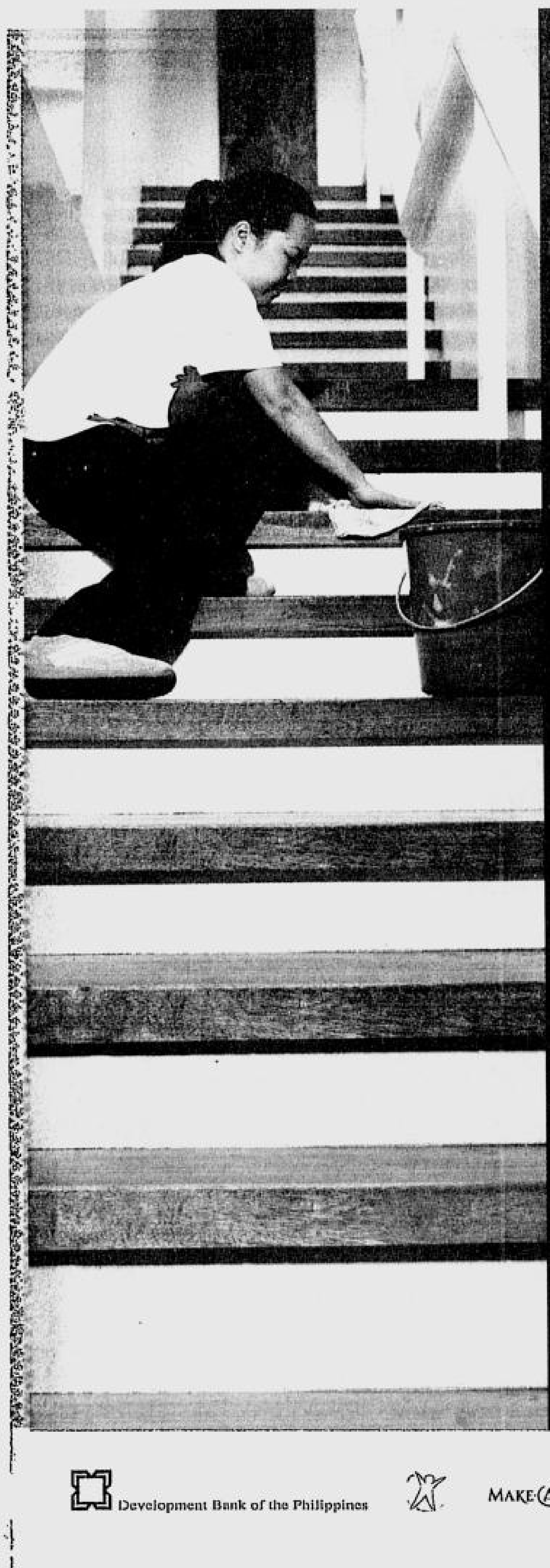
Youngest solon is envoy's son

CHRISTIAN M. Señeres took his oath yesterday as the 20th party-list member of the House of Representatives before members of the Commission on Elections led by Chair Benjamin Abalos.

Señeres took his oath as the second nominee of the party-list group Buhay after a protracted legal battle before the Supreme Court. The high court has decided that the Buhay group is not a religious organization as claimed by its opponents. The group advocates pro-life and anti-death penalty policies. Señeres was proclaimed also yesterday by the national board of canvassers.

Señeres, who holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree, is now the youngest representative in Philippine history, having been elected at the age of 25 years, two months and 11 days. He is the son of former Ambassador and currently National Labor Relations Commission Chair Roy V. Señeres.

Present at his oath-taking were his father, NLRC Chair Señeres, mother Minnie Señeres, sister Hannah and Election Commissioners Rufino Javier, Rex Borra and Florendiono Tuason.



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Poe sought LP endorsement

By Michael Lim Ubac

ON the eve of his proclamation as standard-bearer of the opposition coalition, actor Fernando Poe Jr. secretly sought the endorsement of the Liberal Party.

Both Senate President Franklin Drilon and administration Sen. Francis Pangilinan confirmed that LP leaders led by its chair, Batanas Rep. Butch Abad, met with Poe the other night.

But Drilon, the new LP president, and Pangilinan were not present at the meeting held in a hotel on Roxas Boulevard in Pasay.

Asked about what Poe and the LP leaders had talked about, Drilon said: "I was not there (because) there were sessions here (in the Senate)."

Quoting Abad, Pangilinan described the meeting as "informal and very casual."

He said: "FPJ met with selected party leaders. It is part of the LP's decision to go through a consultation process before we decide on whom to support in 2004."

Robot capture elates South Africans

A SOUTH African couple once held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf have expressed relief over the capture of bandit leader Galib Andang, the South African Broadcasting Corp. in Johannesburg reported.

"The arrest of Galib Andang alias Robot and the release of the last hostage [Roland Ulla] a few months ago bring to a close the traumatic event of three years ago," Callie and Monique Strydom said in a statement.

The Strydoms, who were among the 21 mostly Europeans seized from a resort in Sipadan, Malaysia, in April 2000, also voiced hope that the capture would put a stop to kidnappings by the Abu Sayyaf.

"We sincerely hope his capture will serve as a warning to the remaining rebels and other hostage-takers operating in the Philippines," they said, adding that it was up to Philippine authorities to decide on the penalty to impose on Andang.

"We are opposed to the death penalty and we believe that as Christians, we are not in a position to judge anybody. We have no doubt that Andang and others like him will be judged in the hereafter," they said.

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday asserted that Robot's victims should be given justice. *Reports from TJ Burgonio and Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Don't turn kids into 'sex bombs'!

From page A1

this season of Christmas kiddie parties.

Soliman yesterday urged day care centers nationwide not to turn their three- to five-year-old wards into pint-sized versions of the popular "Sex Bomb" dancers or similar troupes on TV.

Instead, she promoted "folk dances" in children's programs, particularly dances indigenous to the region. She thus lauded day care centers in Muslim communities which are pushing traditional culture among the young.

Impressionable

While maintaining she had no problem with "Sex Bomb" type of entertainment for or by adults, Soliman said she found "the gyrations and the sexual innuendos" inappropriate for impressionable minors.

"If you are that young, dressed up like that, and applauded or sometimes laughed at for doing it, you could grow up thinking it's just all right for the body to be an object of play and amusement (*na ang katawan pwedeng paglaruan at pagtawanan*)," she told the INQUIRER in an interview.

"At their age, they don't know yet the sexual implications of the dance."

Soliman gave a scenario in which a girl brought up that way might "rationalize" the hard choices she has to make if tempted to go to work in girly bars.

Consciousness

"Even if you yourself feel that it's wrong, you will rationalize to yourself as a woman that it might be just okay," she explained. "Because in your consciousness (sexually suggestive dances) were positive, affirmed and even rewarded acts you did as a child."

The Department of Education "agrees" with Soliman's position on this. That's why "sex bomb" type of dance numbers are "discouraged" especially in elementary schools. *Volt Contreras*

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FPJ no-show at his proclamation

From page A1

voice broke as he profusely thanked his supporters. "You just don't know how I feel today, you just don't know," Poe said.

Announcement today?

Leaders of the coalition are nevertheless confident that Poe will accept the nomination. "I'm positive that he will make an announcement (today)," Sotto told reporters.

But for Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who wants to be the standard bearer of the opposition, said Poe held back apparently because the actor would still want to hold a dialog with him before making any decision.

"The gentleman that he (Poe) is, I suppose he is waiting for us to talk before he accepts anything if he does accept it," Lacson said in the Senate.

This was what Poe did before he declared he was making himself available as a presidential candidate, according to the senator.

Meeting with Lacson

Lacson recalled that the actor met with him first on Nov. 14 to tell him he was declaring himself available as a presidential aspirant. Poe declared he was running for president on Nov. 26.

Next president

The other day, Poe said he was willing to yield to Lacson if only to unite the opposition.

At the Intercon gathering, coalition leaders proclaimed Poe their man for 2004 whom they boldly predicted would be the next president. The coalition is made up of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino and the PDP-Laban.

Members of other parties like the People's Reform Party of former Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, the Nationalist People's Coalition of Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. and the Kapayapaan, Kaunlaran and Katahimikan-Laban (KKK) of former Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim were also there to support Poe's presidential candidacy.

Other personalities

Representing Santiago was her husband, Narciso, while former Ambassador to the United States Ernesto Maceda, was there as president emeritus of NPC. They were joined by Sen. Gregorio Honasan, Aurora Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, Representatives Didagen Dilangalen, Jun Chipeco, Imee Marcos, former Manila Mayor Mel Lopez, and former Rep. Lou Antonino.

Also in attendance were show business friends of Poe's such as Rudy Fernandez, Isko Moreno (a Manila councilor), Rico Puno (a Makati councilor), and Jinggoy Estrada.

Reading a resolution issued by the coalition, former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who chaired the nomination committee, said Poe bested Lacson, and Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Honasan.

Unanimous

Enrile said the nomination committee "unanimously and unqualifiedly" recommended Poe to be the standard bearer of the coalition.

Enrile cited the following "qualities" of Poe that allowed him to clinch the nomination.

- Poe's demonstrated desire and sincerity to serve the country and the Filipino people, his patriotism and humanity, his sterling leadership and success in the movie industry, his humility as a person, his well-known honesty, integrity and fairness in dealing with others and his innate wisdom and intelligence;
- His exemplary family background, his behavior as a family man, and his extraordinary feat—at a very young age he lifted his widowed mother and orphaned siblings from the mire of poverty after the death of his father, Fernando Poe Sr.;
- The trust, respect and confidence he commands from the general public;
- The tremendous outpouring of popular support for his candidacy and the phenomenal upsurge of his rating in the latest Social Weather Stations survey taken before he even declared his intention to seek the presidency; and
- His capacity to re-unify the shattered and fragmented society, and his ability to develop a consensus among the people about the urgent need to bring about meaningful changes and reforms.

Angara, Morales and Binay

The resolution was signed by Sen. Edgardo Angara for LDP, Horacio Morales for PMP and Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay for PDP-Laban.

Sotto said yesterday's affair was a "nomination-proclamation" of Poe and "national executive committee meeting" of the coalition, which did not require Poe's presence.

Asked why Poe did not accept the nomination right away, Sotto said this was just Poe's style. "He's not a traditional politician, so he would not do it the traditional politician way which is to accept the nomination right away and be present at the occasion," the senator explained.

Sotto said he was confident Poe would "acknowledge and accept" the nomination. "Let's just wait until he says it himself."

Usual humble self

Asked about Poe's statement the other day that he may yield to Lacson just to unite the opposition, Sotto said the actor was just being his "usual humble self." Sotto expressed confidence that Poe would not back out of the presidential race.

Sure

Former San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada said that he was "101 percent" sure that Poe would accept the nomination and that the latter would do so "very soon."

For his part, Morales said Poe did not accept right away the nomination because the actor was just preparing what to say.

"We're very confident that (he will accept)," Morales told reporters.

Unfair selection

Lacson said he believed Poe may have "held back" accepting the nomination because in their earlier meeting the actor had told him he would not agree to a rigged selection process. "I was not surprised that he did not accept it, because probably he saw that the selection process was not a fair one," he told reporters.

Aventajado: Libyans took part of ransom

From page A1

He said that in the instances when ransom money was delivered to the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu, it was Capt. Emil Zosa of the Presidential Security Group who handled it and brought it to emissaries who, in turn, transported it to the Abu Sayyaf's "no man's land" under the Libyans' constant watch.

And when the plane of Libyan President Moammar Khadaffy landed, carrying the $25 million, it was Zosa who loaded the money in a service vehicle and the Libyans who helped guard it while it was being transported from the airport to Azzarouq's residence in Dasmariñas Village, Makati City, Aventajado said.

He also said that before the money was handed to the Abu Sayyaf, Ismail was assigned to count it to make sure that the ransom agreed upon was the same amount turned over to the bandit group.

In his book, "140 Days of Terror: In the Clutches of the Abu Sayyaf," Aventajado recounted an incident on Aug. 25, 2000, where Andang "nearly scuttled" the scheduled release of South African hostage Callie Strydom when he found that the P255 million given him was short of P300,000.

"Ismail admits taking P300,000 after Captain Zosa insists seeing [him] get a bundle of bills from the bag. Ismail gives Zosa some dollars to be exchanged for P300,000. The next day, emissaries return to Robot in Talipao to fetch Callie Strydom. He is flown by Aventajado to Cebu to join his wife and the freed hostages," Aventajado wrote in the chapter titled "The Money Trail."

He said Azzarouq also made a killing in changing the money from dollars to pesos.

At one point, he said, Azzarouq "insisted that the exchange rate used be P42.50 to $1 instead of the prevailing rate of P45 to $1."

"What he would do with the difference he saved, which amounted to P25 million, only Azzarouq knew, and he wasn't telling anyone, nor was it any of our business," he wrote.

'I never saw it'

Aventajado said he was not able to personally ascertain whether the money brought in amounted to $25 million "because I never actually saw it."

"Money never passed through my hands," he told the INQUIRER.

He said it was Zosa who estimated the amount from the number of money bags unloaded from the Libyan plane.

"How he could estimate $25 million in bundles of unknown denominations just from the weight of it, he never explained to me," Aventajado said.

Despite denials

At around that time, the media were reporting the $25-million ransom, something that Aventajado and Malacañang vehemently denied.

On Dec. 11, 2000, the German magazine Der Spiegel published a report claiming that Estrada had "cleaned nicely on the approximately $20 million ransom."

Clears Erap, Reyes

Quoting German secret service agents who reportedly intercepted satellite phone conversations between Andang and Estrada officials, the magazine said "10 percent supposedly went to [Aventajado], 40 percent to Estrada, who again is supposed to have shared part of this with a security advisor and Army chief Gen. Angelo Reyes."

Aventajado denied this, saying: "If I have a third of what Der Spiegel said I got out of the ransom, I could have afforded a libel suit in the German courts."

He likewise cleared Estrada of the accusation: "In fairness to President Estrada, he doesn't know about it. I'm the one in the field."

Personal view

The German Embassy refused to comment on Aventajado's disclosure in his book that Germany, along with Libya and the Philippines, paid at least $11 million to the Abu Sayyaf as ransom for the release of 11 foreigners abducted from Sipadan.

A ranking embassy official told reporters in an interview that he had yet to obtain a copy of Aventajado's book.

"If he described the situation that way, being a party to it as government negotiator, then that's his personal account," the diplomat said. "What he describes is his personal account. It's his personal view ... You can't base a case on a book. There's already a case filed by the public prosecutor."

Germany's interest

The diplomat said his government's main interest was to bring Andang to justice.

"We are happy to see him behind bars. We would like justice to be done and the government to take the necessary legal steps, but there is no dramatic urgency," he said, adding:

"This criminal did a lot of harm to your society, to your people. You should be reminded of the ruthless things he did. The number of foreigners that were abducted is a small fraction compared to what he did to your people. The Abu Sayyaf group is an evil group."

The diplomat also said his government would cooperate in bringing Andang to justice.

"The culprits should be punished," he said. "We expect justice to take its course, and it should be done according to international legal standards."

Pending cases vs Robot

The diplomat said one or two cases filed by the public prosecutor were pending in Germany against Andang and other Abu Sayyaf leaders who held captive German couple Werner and Renate Wallert and their son Marc.

He said that under German laws, a public prosecutor could file a case on behalf of a German citizen who was a victim of kidnapping and other crimes.

"And the perpetrators will be tried in public," he said. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

Robot's leg amputated, thanks doctors

From page A1

ation that lasted from 10:45 p.m. Tuesday to 12:40 a.m. Wednesday.

"We had to do it because the signs of gangrene were setting in; there were parts in the leg that were turning black. If we left it that way, sepsis [blood poisoning] would occur," Regino said in a phone interview.

'Don't let him live'

Regino also said Andang accepted his fate, having been informed that the amputation had "high chances" of occurring because of the multiple wounds he sustained in both legs in a reported shoot-out prior to his capture Sunday night in Indanan, Sulu.

But Roland Ulla, a former hostage of the Abu Sayyaf, said the military should not have let the wounded Andang live.

Ulla, who was among the group of mostly European tourists snatched in April 2000 from the Sipadan beach resort in Sabah, Malaysia, said the members of the bandit group "had no mercy when we were in the mountains."

"The military should not have let him live," Ulla said yesterday at the Department of Justice. "They even fought among themselves about who should behead their captives."

Andang is under heavy guard by a group of soldiers complemented yesterday by agents of the Intelligence Service of the AFP.

Rep. Jose Apolinario Lozada (Lakas, Negros Occidental), chair of the House committee on foreign affairs, called for round-the-clock, airtight security for the bandit leader.

Lozada said Andang was in danger of being "silenced" to prevent him from "spilling the beans on the operations of his group and its supposed military and political backers."

"These people may want to see not only his leg amputated but his head severed as well," the lawmaker said, adding:

"The threat against the life of Commander Robot is real. The military and police should do everything it takes to make sure he stays alive."

The Abu Sayyaf's ties to rogue military, police and government officials have been the subject of intense speculation since the bandit group came to national prominence.

There are unresolved questions on the identities of officials who supposedly shared in the ransom loot amassed by the bandit group during its hostage-taking spree.

Well of information

There are also accounts that the Abu Sayyaf had been purchasing arms, ammunition and other supplies from their military contacts, and that the group was formed as part of a special government operation designed to discredit Moro secessionist groups.

"Andang could be a well of information, and some people ... might not want him to talk to government authorities at all," Lozada said.

But the lawmaker cautioned the government against striking deals with the bandit leader in exchange for information he might offer, saying "no amount of explosive information from him can exonerate him for his notorious criminal and terrorist activities."

Lozada also doubts the sincerity of Andang, who has been reported as expressing remorse.

"If he were not hit in the legs during a shoot-out with soldiers, he would have been planning in his hideout with his men their next kidnapping. He is just saying that because he is now in the lion's den," Lozada said.

According to Lozada, a man like Andang is "very good at deception and psychological warfare."

"His revelations, particularly on his group's backers, should be counter-checked before these are made public," Lozada said.

Justice Undersecretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez also said the government should carefully verify information from Andang because the latter could be lying.

Expenses

Regino said the government had so far spent some P70,000 on Andang since he was taken to the V. Luna Medical Center on Monday afternoon.

Earlier, the military said it spent some P420,000 in flying Andang from Sulu to Manila.

Regino said he would recommend that a prosthesis be made for Andang's left leg.

He said Gen. Narciso Abaya, Armed Forces chief of staff, had mentioned "in passing" that Andang would be fitted with artificial legs if his own were amputated.

"We can start with wood. If government resources permit, we can later [go for] good quality," Regino said.

The price of a prosthesis depends on the material used. If wood is used, the prosthesis can cost from P50,000 to P100,000; and titanium, from P500,000 to P1 million.

In the country, only the V. Luna Medical Center and the Philippine Orthopedic Center are equipped with a brace and prosthesis shop, Regino said.

Andang, who is in his 40s, may be fitted with an artificial leg after three to six months of "full rehabilitation." But Regino said it would take from six months to a year before Andang could fully recover.

Human rights

The DOJ's Gutierrez said the government was spending money on Andang not only because he could provide information on the Abu Sayyaf but also because of his rights that the government should respect.

"We can't just leave him alone. We could be accused of human rights violations. Those who are arrested are also entitled to the protection of the law," Gutierrez said.

She also said Andang, "an important figure in the Abu Sayyaf," could also give information on terrorist groups allied with it.

Ulla said that when the Abu Sayyaf bandits executed two intelligence officers, they burned the bodies and fed the remains to dogs.

He said the bandits were brutal but turned meek when arrested. *With a report from Carlito Pablo*

Roxas quits post to run for Senate, to enjoy son

From page A1

of my family."

Asked about the boy's mother, Roxas playfully pretended to be briefing reporters. "The President's economic agenda...," he said, eliciting laughter. The woman is said to be a former beauty queen.

He said he was a very private person who prefers to "shield my family from the rough and tumble of public life."

"I think that he's young and he should enjoy youth, that's what I recall my father gave to us. It's a gift he gave to us, we were able to be ordinary and enjoy our youth without being in the public eye," Roxas said.

Roxas said he wanted to make his political aspirations known early to avoid allegations that he may be taking advantage of his public office to further his political ambitions.

He said he was running for a Senate seat under the Liberal Party in order to push for legislation that he said would "revitalize the *palengke* (marketplace)."

"See you in the campaign trail," he quoted a "jovial" President as telling him yesterday morning. The filing of candidacy with the Commission on Elections starts Dec. 15 and ends Jan. 2.

'Mr. Palengke'

"It allows me to concentrate and prepare for the campaign. It will be a grueling and difficult effort and I thank the President for accommodating my request," he said.

Roxas, who goes by the moniker "Mr. Palengke," said he had discussed with the President for several months his desire to return to the legislative branch.

A former congressman and grandson of late President Manuel Roxas, he took over the trade and industry portfolio during the administration of former President Joseph Estrada. He resigned shortly before Estrada was ousted in a mass revolt in 2001, but was later reinstated by Ms Macapagal.

"I look forward to continue serving the country with you as I join your team in seeking the people's mandate in 2004," Roxas said in his resignation letter he submitted to Ms Macapagal, who is running for president.

Replacements

He has recommended that Undersecretary Adrian Cristobal Jr. take his place until the President decides who should replace him.

Roxas said he gave some names to the President as his replacement, but denied that former Executive Secretary Oscar Orbos was one of them.

"The President has spoken to a member of the private sector... and that person is reviewing possible divestment and contractual limitations that may prevent him from taking on the job permanently," he said.

Sources said those being considered to replace Roxas include SGV chair Cesar Purisima and Board of Investments head Greg Domingo.

Asked why he wanted to run for the Senate when he was being considered for vice president, Roxas said: "Thank you but I have much more modest aspirations."

He said he would push for legislation to revitalize the marketplace, where his job as trade secretary often took him.

"The vitality and vibrancy in the *palengke* is a reflection of the entire economy. The *palengke* is the nexus of the entire supply chain. Buyers, sellers, service providers, products from all over the countryside and consumers come to the *palengke*," he said.

Reflection of economy

"So the marketplace, whether it's a *talipapa*, a *palengke*, a supermarket or even stock market is a reflection of the entire economy," he said.

At a press conference at the Department of Trade and Industry, he said he would pursue the programs he initiated during his stint at the trade department.

Some of his popular programs included wider access to affordable medicines, provision of personal computers to public high schools nationwide, and the "Timbangan ng Bayan" and "Palengke ng Bayan" in which the prices and quality of goods sold at retail stores and public markets were regularly monitored.

Roxas said one of his primary accomplishments in the trade department was pushing for programs that integrated the interest of conflicting sectors—such as of suppliers and consumers, and of local and foreign investors.

He was one of those who spearheaded the recently concluded review and realignment of the country's tariff rates as co-chair of the Cabinet-level Tariff and Related Matters committee.

Tariff rates of various raw materials, intermediate goods and finished products that directly compete with locally produced ones have been raised to protect local industries badly hurt by the government's earlier initiative of lowering tariffs. Imported products used as contents of locally produced ones have been lowered to reduce production cost of local industries.

Even before Roxas formally announced his resignation, members of the business community had declared their support for the former trade chief.

Francis Chua, executive vice president of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, described Roxas as a "treasure" to the country.

He cited the trade department's efforts to conduct dialogue with the business sector on various political and economic issues. He said the business community would be willing to finance his political campaign if Roxas would ask for it.

Serves by heart

Vivian Yuchengco, president of the Philippine Association of Brokers and Dealers and former chair of the Philippine Stock Exchange, said Roxas would be a loss to the trade department but would be an asset to the Senate.

"We need people like Mar Roxas. He is energetic, honest and serves the country by heart," she said.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, president of the influential Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the business community believed that Roxas would be a good addition to the Senate. *With a report from Elena R. Torrijos*

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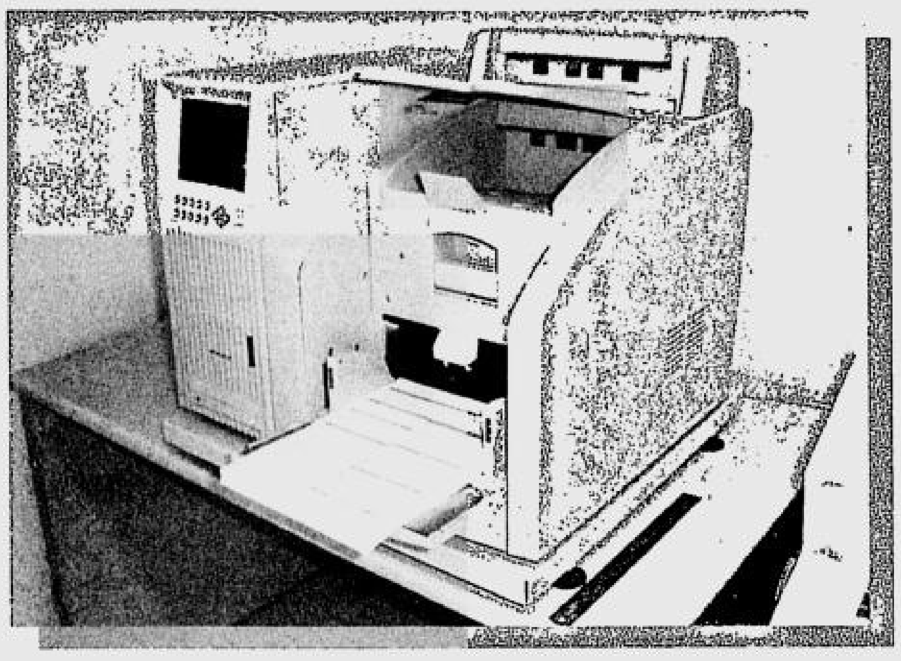

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More reassuring is the fact that it would take significantly longer than the estimated age of the universe, which is 10 to 15 billion years, to even get near to cracking the 168-bit key. Even if all the computers are connected and networked in the internet, it will take trillions of years to break the 1024-bit encryption algorithm keys used in the ACM.

In the unlikely event that an electronic transaction of the ACM is intercepted and decrypted, it does not mean that all private keys to the system have been found. It would still take as much time and effort on a second transaction as the first. It would take 72 million weeks to break a 56-bit medium encryption. That length of time is compounded with a 168-bit.

Aside from its internal security features, only authorized COMELEC officers and operators with the 16-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) and restricted USB key with 1024-bit Digital Certificates can operate the counting machines.

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The ACM can read both sides of a ballot simultaneously and detect fake and previously read ballots. It is encoded with Magnetic Ink Character Recognition (MICR) system as required by law.

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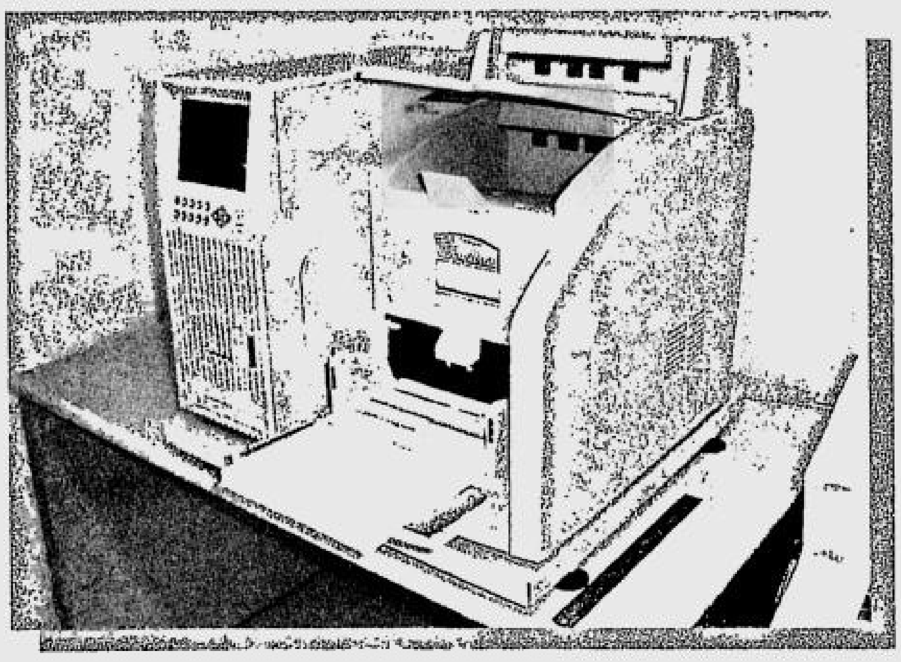

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Radicals split over attacks on soft targets that kill Muslims

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Southeast Asian radicals are divided over the wisdom of attacking hotels, nightclubs and other "soft targets" where Muslims may be killed alongside Westerners—an internal split that could weaken the terrorist enterprise, authorities told the Associated Press.

Some militants inside the al-Qaida-linked Southeast Asian terror network Jemaah Islamiyah want their jihad, or holy war, to focus on fighting Christians in certain regions of Indonesia rather than bombing Western targets where Muslims die, too, according to government officials, defense attorneys and an intelligence adviser to Indonesia.

The debate among Indonesian militants appears to have intensified after the Aug. 5 bombing of the JW Marriott in Jakarta—whose 12 fatalities were mostly Muslim. A prominent group of Muslim defense lawyers told AP they would not accept any Marriott bombers as clients.

After the Marriott bombing, several senior militants close to Zulkarnaen, JI's purported operations chief, expressed displeasure because most of the victims were Muslim, said the senior intelligence adviser who asked that his name not be used.

He said the information was based on internal JI communications picked up by Indonesian intelligence agents.

The revelations about the rift coincide with a post-Sept. 11 hobbling of al-Qaida's and JI's command-and-control structure that many officials believe has led to more indiscriminate targeting—not just in Indonesia, but around the globe—moving away from al-Qaida's tradition of limiting attacks to Western and Jewish targets.

Dissension inside militant ranks could potentially weaken terrorist networks anywhere in the world, officials said, though it may also mean greater danger as cells attack without the blessings of their peers.

In fact, officials in Indonesia, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said they're bracing for more attacks, which they say are increasingly likely, especially during the Christmas and New Year holidays.

Indonesia's national security minister, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, warned in a speech Sunday in Bali that terrorists appear to be "regrouping, reconnecting, recruiting and retraining."

JI—whose professed goal is to impose an Islamic superstate spanning much of Southeast Asia—is loosely organized with an estimated 3,000 members in the region, including 2,000 in Indonesia.

Several senior JI operatives were not privy to either the Marriott bombing or the Oct. 12, 2002 twin nightclub attacks on Bali Island that killed 202 people, officials told AP, underscoring the diffuse nature of the terror group and its ability to act without consensus.

Most of the Bali blasts' victims were vacationing foreigners, with only a few Muslims, mostly waiters and other workers, among the dead. That's because Bali, unlike the rest of Indonesia, is primarily Hindu and because the Sari Club, the worst-hit of the two nightclubs, had a controversial policy of only admitting foreigners.

All this helps explain why the Marriott attack led to far more soul searching among militants than the Bali blasts. *AP*

Suicide bombing kills 6 in Moscow

MOSCOW—A suicide bomb attack killed at least six people and wounded 13 others in the heart of Moscow on Tuesday, just two days after Russian voters handed President Vladimir Putin an even tighter grip on power.

"We can say with certainty that this was a terrorist act ... linked to the elections to the State Duma (parliament)," said Sergei Tsoi, a spokesperson for Moscow's mayor.

It was the second suicide bombing in Russia in five days and the second deadly bomb attack in the capital this year. The first one in July, which killed 15 people at an outdoor concert, was blamed on Chechen separatist rebels.

Mayor Yuri Luzhkov said Tuesday's attack may have been the work of two women suicide bombers. The deputy interior minister said police were investigating whether there were three.

"There is an obvious Chechen connection," Itar-Tass news agency quoted Luzhkov as saying. He said the two women had asked directions to the State Duma lower house of parliament.

Security camera footage showed one of them wearing a belt of explosives, Luzhkov told TVTs television.

Putin called for new action to halt "terrorists" who, he said, were trying to undermine economic and democratic development.

"The actions of criminals, terrorists which we have to confront even today are aimed against all that," he said.

Police spokesperson Kirill Mazurin said four people were killed outright. Another was reported to have died on the way to the hospital. Moscow police said a sixth died later.

Itar-Tass news agency said the bomb had been packed with nails and metal pieces, making its effect more devastating when it went off just before 11 a.m. (0800 GMT).

It quoted security sources as saying one of the suicide bombers had been on a police wanted list and was suspected of having undergone training at a guerrilla training camp.

The attack cast another shadow over last Sunday's election for parliament's lower house, which handed an overwhelming victory to Putin's allies but was challenged by Western critics.

Last Friday, an apparent suicide attack on a commuter train killed at least 44 people near rebel Chechnya, scene of almost daily bloodshed between Russian forces and separatist rebels.

The fourth such election since the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991 crushed Putin's Communist and liberal opponents and prompted warnings of a return to authoritarian rule.

The outcome makes Putin's reelection for a second term next March a near certainty. The upper house is due to set March 14 as the date for the presidential poll at a meeting on Wednesday.

Despite speculation that the new Duma makeup could allow Putin to change the constitution to let him bid for a third term in office, the president on Tuesday ruled out any amendments.

The election result is worrying global investors who, though hoping Putin can push through more legal and economic reforms, fear it may mean more state interference in the private sector.

Many analysts believe the arrest on tax fraud and corruption charges of the former head of oil giant Yukos, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, in October was inspired by Kremlin hardliners.

In the latest blow to Yukos, tax police searched the Moscow headquarters of a bank owned by Menatep, the main shareholder in the oil firm, a spokesperson for Menatep SPb bank said. *Reuters*

A POLICE officer stands guard outside the National Hotel in central Moscow, where an explosion on Tuesday killed at least six people. REUTERS

US bars firms from Iraq deals

WASHINGTON—The United States has barred companies from France, Germany, Russia, Canada and other nations that refused to join the US-led coalition in Iraq from competing for billions of dollars in prime contracts to rebuild the country, a Pentagon memorandum made public Tuesday said.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, in a decision dated Dec. 5, cited "essential security interests" of the United States and the need to encourage countries to provide troops for Iraq as the reason for limiting competition for $18.6 billion in prime contracts.

They range from equipping the new Iraqi army to rebuilding and refurbishing power and water plants, roads, oil installations and communications systems.

Its decision, which was posted on a Pentagon website, lists 63 countries that are eligible to compete for some 26 prime contracts that cover the sweep of Iraq's reconstruction needs.

Conspicuously absent from the list are the countries that opposed the war and have declined to send troops to join in the post-war occupation of Iraq, including France, Germany, Russia and Canada.

"It is necessary for the protection of the essential security interests of the United States to limit competition for the prime contracts of these procurements to companies from the United States, Iraq, coalition partners and force contributing nations," the Wolfowitz finding said.

"Thus it is clearly in the public interest to limit prime contracts to companies from these countries," it said. *AFP*

Bush warning delights China; Taiwan defends vote plan

TAIPEI—Taiwan's president on Wednesday sidestepped a warning from George W. Bush not to change the status quo with China and defended a plan for a referendum to press Beijing to remove missiles aimed at the island.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, who sat alongside Bush when he delivered his warning in Washington on Tuesday, welcomed what was a nuanced hardening of the usual line that the United States does "not support" independence moves by the island.

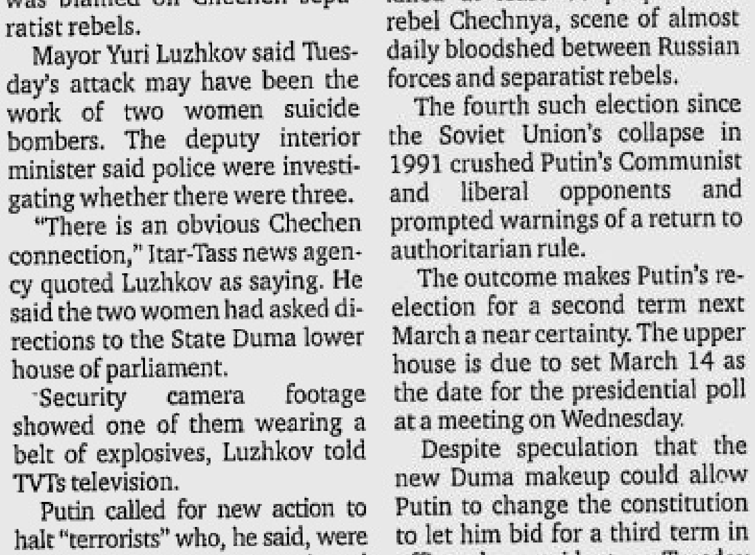
Taiwan's supporters in the United States expressed concern, but its financial markets took Bush's comments mostly in their stride. The main stock index was down less than one percent, mostly due to a fall on Nasdaq. The local dollar was firm.

In comments to a group of US lawmakers within hours of Bush's message, President Chen Shui-bian said the referendum was aimed only at avoiding war with China, its diplomatic foe since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949.

"The topic of the defensive referendum ballot is very simple, very concrete and very important," Chen said. "We demand the opposite side to dismantle their missiles and publicly renounce the use of force against Taiwan. And our defensive referendum also aims to avoid war and eliminate the people's fear."

Chen said he supported the status quo with China, which sees the referendum as a cover for separatist moves by a breakaway province that must one day be returned to the fold—by force, if necessary.

"Taiwan is an independent sovereign country. As the president of the Republic of China, my duty and mission is to protect our country's sovereignty, dignity and safety and protect our current independent status to make sure it doesn't change," he said, using the island's official name. *Reuters*



HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Activists of the Tibetan Youth Congress pray during a demonstration to mark International Human Rights' Day in New Delhi and oppose China's annexation of Tibet in 1950. REUTERS

Bush: N. Korea nuke freeze offer not good enough

WASHINGTON—North Korea's willingness to freeze its nuclear weapons program in exchange for US concessions falls short of what is necessary to end its standoff with the United States, President George W. Bush said Tuesday in rejecting the offer.

The president's statement, and similar remarks by White House and State Department spokespersons, appeared part of jockeying for position in advance of another round of talks with North Korea.

"The goal of the United States is not for a freeze of the nuclear program," Bush said. "The goal is to dismantle a nuclear weapons program in a verifiable and irreversible way."

"That," he said, "is the clear message we are sending to the North Koreans."

The president spoke at a brief news conference with Premier Wen Jiabao of China, who visited Bush at the White House.

The Chinese are working to revive stalled talks between North Korea and the United States, South Korea, Japan, Russia and China after a five-month pause.

According to a senior US official, China has a sense of progress toward setting up new talks with North Korea but does not believe that point has been reached yet.

North Korea's latest overture was not taken up by Bush and Wen, said the official on condition of anonymity.

"We spent a lot of time talking about North Korea here," Bush said after his meeting with Wen. "We share a mutual goal, and that is for the Korean peninsula to be nuclear weapons-free."

The president said the United States would keep working with China and the other countries in the six-party talks "to resolve this issue peacefully."

The talks had been expected to resume Dec. 17, but a starting date remains elusive as Chinese officials shuttle between Washington and Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, to try to work out terms. *AP*

Writer, 9 scientists to receive Nobel

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—An intensely private South African writer, scientists whose research has helped develop magnetic resonance imaging, and researchers who uncovered secrets of human cells were being honored at the Nobel Prize awards ceremony.

Ten laureates were set to accept the prestigious awards in medicine, physics, chemistry, literature and economics on Wednesday from King Carl XVI Gustaf, the Swedish monarch.

The peace prize was being awarded in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, in line with the will of Alfred Nobel.

Each prize carries a cash award of 10 million kroner (nearly US$1.4 million).

J.M. Coetzee, 63, was to receive the literature prize, the second South African to pick up the award after Nadine Gordimer, who won in 1991. Coetzee is a solitary figure, who rarely communicates with the media and prefers doing so by e-mail.

The Swedish Academy called Coetzee "a scrupulous doubter, ruthless in his criticism of the cruel rationalism and cosmetic morality of Western civilization." It also cited his "well-crafted composition, pregnant dialogue and analytical brilliance" in more than a dozen novels, including "Disgrace," "Life and Times of Michael K.," "Waiting for the Barbarians" and "Age of Iron."

American Paul C. Lauterbur and Briton Sir Peter Mansfield were selected for the Nobel Prize in medicine or physiology for discoveries leading to magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI, the body-scanning technique that has revolutionized the detection of disease.

The physics prize went to Alexei A. Abrikosov, of the United States and Russia, Anthony J. Leggett, of the United States and Britain, and Russia's Vitaly L. Ginzburg, for their work concerning two phenomena called superconductivity and superfluidity.

Americans Peter Agre and Roderick MacKinnon won the chemistry prize for their studies of tiny transportation tunnels in human cell walls, work that could lead to greater understanding of diseases of the heart, kidneys, muscles and nervous system.

American Robert F. Engle and Briton Clive W. J. Granger shared the Nobel Memorial Prize in economics for developing statistical tools that have improved the forecasting of economic growth, interest rates and stock prices.

Iranian human rights activist Shirin Ebadi won the Nobel Peace Prize for her work fighting for democracy and the rights of women and children.

The Nobel Prizes are usually announced in October and are handed out every year on Dec. 10, the anniversary of the 1896 death of Nobel, a Swedish industrialist and the inventor of dynamite. *AP*

Traders want Noli to prevent FPJ win

From page A1

Needed for 'rebirth'

Appointed as envoy to Britain by President Macapagal, Espiritu said he believes De Castro is the kind of person who is needed for the "rebirth of the country" because of his attitude towards the poor and "his hesitance to be in politics for a very long time."

Asked if he is already on the De Castro bandwagon as finance campaign manager, Espiritu quipped, "Am I only good for finance?"

De Castro denied to the INQUIRER that he had asked Espiritu to be his finance campaign manager.

In a phone interview, the senator said that Espiritu is currently at his post in London.

Asked whether he knew Espiritu personally, De Castro said that he did, and that he knew the latter during the Estrada administration.

No party needed

Espiritu said De Castro is a good friend. "I did a lot of research on the man. He won as independent candidate (in the last senatorial race) and I was interested to learn why he clicked with the people. I have been trying to analyze the political situation in the country. Why do you have to be part of a party to win?."

Advice

He disclosed that his advice to De Castro when the latter called last month was to run for the vice presidency as this was a "good training ground to become a statesman."

"It's good to be vice president because you cannot be compared to another senator. You are your own man, and it is good preparation for the presidency," Espiritu reportedly told De Castro.

"If he runs for vice president I will definitely help and support him," Espiritu told the INQUIRER.

Not Lopez-influenced

He added that, "I believe in the guy because of his beginnings. I read his mind. He is a guy who cannot just be influenced by the Lopezes."

Espiritu was referring to the media mogul Gabby Lopez, board chair of ABS-CBN, De Castro's longtime employer. The INQUIRER learned that De Castro had asked for and gotten the blessings of ABS-CBN executives headed by Lopez.

Certain of support

But yesterday De Castro said that the last time he saw Gabby Lopez was at the wedding last Monday of television anchors Julius Babao and Christine Bersola and that they did not discuss anything about his reported presidential bid.

But anyway, he said he was certain of the Lopez support should he decide to run for higher office.

Behind-the-scenes

A lawyer, Espiritu himself never ran for public office, Espiritu had often been the behind-the-scenes; hands-on political manager. He considers Sen. Juan Flavier his best friend, they having grown up in Baguio together.

During the 1992 presidential race, he was removed as president of the Philippine National Bank when he declared support for the presidential candidacy of Ramon V. Mitra. Then President Corazon C. Aquino endorsed the candidacy of Fidel V. Ramos.

Espiritu threw his support for Estrada in 1998. He was rewarded with the finance post after Estrada's victory but quit after a year allegedly due to the increasing corruption in the administration that Espiritu could not take.

Witness against Erap

Espiritu was one of the witnesses called against Estrada during the impeachment trial.

Talking about his London posting, Espiritu crowed that the Philippines got the number one position in the election of the officials of the International Maritime Organization, a United Nations agency, which handles the safety rules on shipping and seafarers.

He said he was elected vice president of the assembly.

Only four months on the job, Espiritu said he and wife Lydia are spending Christmas in the US where all of his children are based.

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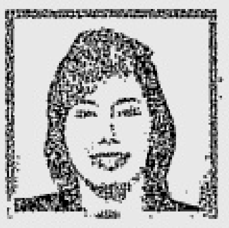

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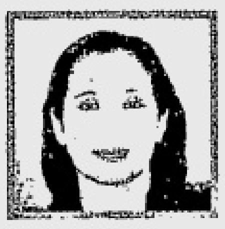

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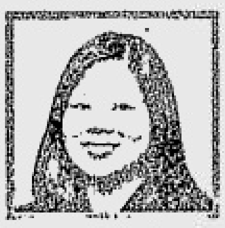

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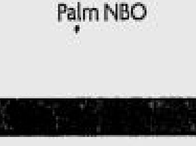

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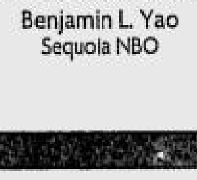

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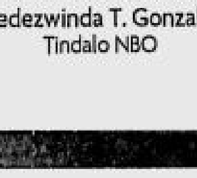

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Ma. Genalin R. Castillo, *Sequoia NBO*
Dina G. Atienza-Laqui, *Chestnut NBO*
Arabella V. Borromeo**, *Cedar NBO*
Severina S. Novera, *Tindalo NBO*
Linda P. Go, *Redwood NBO*
Ma. Teresa I. Briones**, *Tindalo NBO*
Joanne C. Pua, *Palm NBO*

Sun Life Financial Plans, Inc.

Top 3 Sales Consultants

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RMM2

Minerva L. Bayro
Cedar NBO

Mario A. Bernardo
Cedar NBO

2-Star Awardees

Gold Level

Gloria C. Avila
RMM2

Minerva L. Bayro
Cedar NBO

Mario A. Bernardo
Cedar NBO

Nena Tan
RMM2

Velma Saladaga
Davao

Criselda Yee
Davao

Emma Eng
RMM2

Gina Datu
RMM2

Myra C. Cruz
Redwood NBO

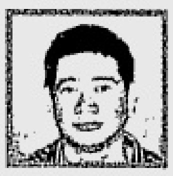
Enoch T. Tan
Redwood NBO

Samuel Madeja
RMM1

Francisco de los Reyes Jr.
RMM1

Rosemarie E. Villanueva
Acacia NBO

Ma. Chona Carreno
Davao


Conrado Ordonez Jr.
RMM2

Arminda Lastimosa
Davao

Silver Level

Ma. Elene Labagala, *Davao*
Judelyn Porquez, *RMM1*
Elfledia Reyes, *RMLM1*

Bronze Level

Jocelyn Barsanas, *Davao*
Susan Salamanca, *RMM1*
Revina Tan Mo, *RMM2*
Frances Y. Chua, Tindalo *NBO*

Cynthia Cruzillo, *RMM2*
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OPINION

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Asian bandwagon

EDITORIAL

THE ASIAN Development Bank has an upbeat economic outlook for developing Asia, led by the new economic powerhouse in the region, China. It describes the region as the "fastest-growing economy in the world."

As 2003 draws to a close, ADB president Tadao Chino said at a press briefing that developing economies in the Asia Pacific are likely to grow by 5.7 percent this year, higher than the 5.3 percent it had forecast in September. He said the region would grow faster this year than in 2002, despite the economic setbacks it experienced during the year, including the conflict in Iraq, the outbreak of the SARS epidemic early this year, the volatility in oil prices and the uncertainty caused by global terrorism. "The outlook for a rebound in the industrialized countries in 2004-2005 and the resilience demonstrated by developing Asia in 2003 indicate the region is poised for higher growth over the next two years," he said. "The Asian economy is projected to grow by 6.2 percent in 2004 and 6.3 percent in 2005. Developing Asia will remain the fastest-growing region."

Whether this buoyant regional outlook will lift the Philippine economy remains in doubt. The outlook for the Philippines is less bullish than that for the entire region. The ADB maintained its gross domestic product growth projection of 4 percent for the Philippines this year, and 4.5 percent for 2004. In 2005, Philippine GDP growth would firm up at 4.2 percent, it said.

China, the driver of growth in the region, is forecast to grow by 8.5 percent in 2003, 8 percent in 2004 and 7.7 percent in 2005. Growth projections for the Philippines are lower than those for Southeast Asia, which is expected to grow by 4.1 percent, according to the revised forecast for 2003.

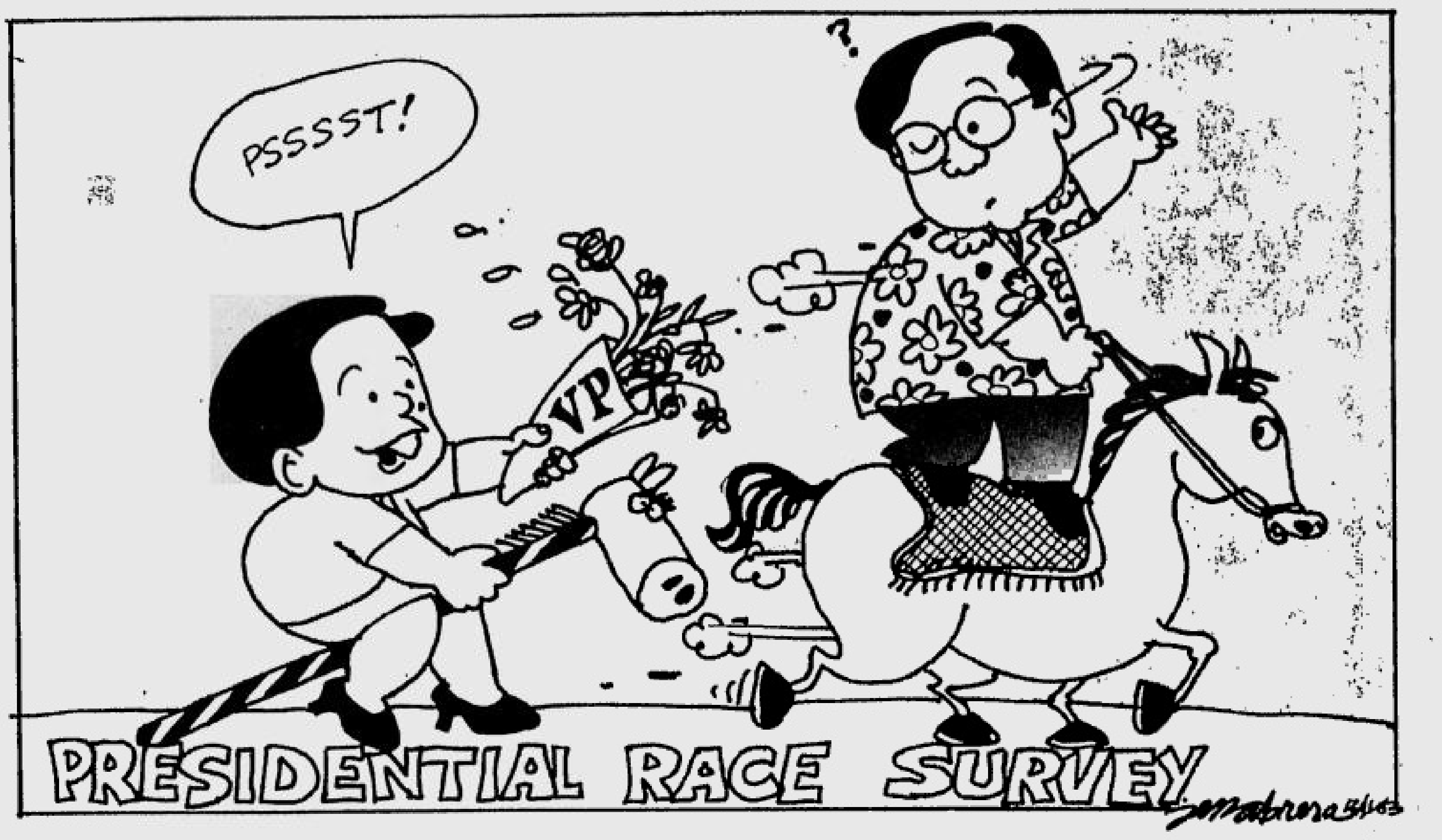
The Southeast Asian region is forecast to grow by 5.7 percent and 5.1 percent in 2004. The growth leaders in Southeast Asia will be Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam. Malaysia is forecast to grow by 4.5 percent in 2003 and 5.7 percent in 2004. Thailand is predicted to grow by 6 percent in 2003 and 6.3 in 2004, and Vietnam, by 6.9 percent in 2003 and 7.1 percent in 2004.

Chino cited four distinct features of the Asian economy in 2003: (1) the critical role of domestic consumption as a major determinant of GDP growth; (2) the rapidly increasing importance of China as a driver of intraregional trade and economic growth; exports from East, Southeast Asia and South Asia to China grew rapidly during the first half of 2003; (3) the accumulation of substantial international reserves by various countries offers a buffer against external shocks; (4) Asia's ability to weather major shocks testifies to its fundamental strength.

Looking ahead, Chino said the Asian economy should prove less vulnerable to downturns in industrialized countries as intraregional trade poses opportunities and challenges. The developing economies need to raise productivity and competitiveness by undertaking major structural reforms over the medium term. Such reforms will accelerate growth over the medium to long term.

Philippine economists have noted that domestic consumption has helped boost the modest economic growth, following the trends in the more dynamic economies of Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam. Among the Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines has been slow in taking advantage of the opportunities offered by China. In recent meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines showed the most reticence in exploring bilateral trade opportunities with China. Its attitude toward China has been hobbled by security concerns caused by Philippine perception of China as a security threat to the region, due to previous disputes over island territories in the South China Sea.

The ADB outlook does not consider non-economic factors affecting growth prospects. Among the Southeast Asian economies, the Philippines has exhibited the greatest political instability. Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand have enjoyed long periods of political stability and continuity. By contrast, the Philippines has been rocked by political turbulence over the past three years at least, causing uncertainties that have impeded sustained growth and driven away foreign investments. Uncertainties arising from the 2004 elections are preventing the Philippines from jumping on board the Asian growth bandwagon.



Don't be afraid of checkpoints

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

DON'T be afraid of the checkpoints if you are a law-abiding citizen, Chief Supt. Ricardo de Leon (translation: Richard the Lionhearted), chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, wants to tell the people. If you are afraid of them, then there's something you're trying to hide. The checkpoints are for the safety of the general population, but not of the criminals, he says.

But people can't help it if they're afraid of policemen and soldiers. In the old days, policemen and soldiers were seen as friends of the people and the nemesis of criminals. Like the marshals in the Old American West, outlaws left town when they showed up.

Not anymore. Now, when policemen arrive at a house that has been burglarized or one of whose members has been kidnapped, the family gets scared. The cops could be in cahoots with the criminals. When cops are at the site of a bank robbery, the joke is that they are not necessarily fast to succor but they have been there from the very beginning. Thus, the understandable wariness against policemen at checkpoints, especially at night.

Don't be, says de Leon, they're there to help, not to harass you. They have been ordered to be polite at all times. There are officers at the checkpoints always to see to it that the patrolmen behave. The checkpoints will be brightly lighted. The policemen will be in regular uniform, complete with patches, insignias and name plates. They're not supposed to poke their heads inside the cars. They're not supposed to frisk or touch the driver or passengers, though they can ask them to open the trunk.

If anyone of them goes out of bounds, you can report them to telephone number 117. De Leon has invented what he calls the "Abakada" of police behavior. Citizens are asked to report cops who are "*abusado, bastos, kotongero at dikanais-nais.*"

What's more, cops are now supposed to be more visible and to come to your aid faster. First, there will be teams composed of policemen, soldiers and barangay tanods who will conduct foot patrols. You're supposed to see them doing this. If you don't, call up the police.

Some areas will necessarily have more patrols than others, the NCR police chief explained. High crime areas will have more patrols; more peaceful ones will have less. Common sense *lang 'yan, di ba?*

If you call the police for help, they're supposed to arrive sooner. There will be motorcycle cops on standby always, so they can speed faster to the crime scene without being held up by traffic. So now motorcycle cops will do other things besides gathering together under the flyovers and swapping stories.

The checkpoints will be moveable. They won't stay in the same place. They'll move from place to place, the better to surprise the criminals. If they stay in the same place, the criminals will learn to avoid them, *'di ba?* So it would be like they're playing hide and seek with the criminals.

"What if you think the cops at a checkpoint are impostors? What should you do?" I asked PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane.

"In that case," Ebdane replied, "you can speed to the nearest police station or any place where there are plenty of people. That would discourage criminals from following. You can even run over them, but you have to be sure they're criminals and not legitimate policemen, or you'll be in big trouble."

"Permanent checkpoints may be the police community precincts," said De Leon. "They're there already, might as well use them."

"Some of them are next to useless," I volunteered. "Traffic around these community precincts are chaotic. Aren't they supposed to take care of traffic also?"

"Yes, of course," De Leon answered. "They're supposed to prevent crime and keep traffic in order. Even if traffic in their areas is under the control of the MMDA, they're supposed to keep it in order at all times."

Which made me wonder why the traffic at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Tandang Sora in Quezon City is always chaotic. There is a police community precinct under the flyover. There are traffic signs all over. Some of these signs have the big red letters "SB" which stand for "Sonny Belmonte" and "Serbisyong Bayan."

Sometimes, barkers from city hall in yellow shirts, again with the red letters "SB" printed on their shirts, stand on raised platforms with loudspeakers and harangue drivers and pedestrians. Then everybody behaves. But as soon as they leave (which is more often than not), drivers and commuters disobey the traffic signs and rules.

The Metro Manila Development Authority has constructed waiting sheds on both sides of Commonwealth, away from the street corners. City hall has put ropes from the corner to the entrance to the driveway of the Shell service station, still several steps away from the waiting shed. Still, nobody uses the sheds. They stand at the end of the rope, or at the corner itself, to wait for rides, and the buses and jeepneys stop there to load and unload, right beside the "No loading and unloading" signs.

All these blatant violations are within sight of the community precinct, but nobody bothers to walk the few steps to tell the commuters and the drivers where to load and unload. Worse, jeepneys stop right beside the precinct, on the innermost lane of Commonwealth, right on top of the pedestrian lane, to wait for and load passengers.

Again, the 'dumb masses'

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I WAS talking to a friend the other day, someone who was deathly scared of FPJ becoming president. That seems to be a strong possibility, if not a foregone conclusion, he said. The middle classes may not like him, but the masses do. He lives near a slum area, my friend said, and while you can hear people say they will vote for Raul Roco and occasionally Panfilo Lacson (hardly anyone mentions GMA), the majority favors FPJ. The dwellers themselves put it in this way: FPJ is their only hope.

"We'll be done for again," my friend said, "by the stupid *masa.*"

It's by no means the first time I've heard that comment since FPJ threw his hat in the ring. It's been a refrain of late. There's just no reasoning with the *masa*, people say. They cannot distinguish between the movies and real life, between fantasy and reality. FPJ saves poor folk in his movies, so the poor figure he will save them from their lot. That's what makes it so easy for them to be manipulated.

The last time I heard this articulated with the same despair and ferocity was during "Edsa III." That was Jaime Cardinal Sin's and Bishop Socrates Villegas' gut reaction to the horde that trampled on the Edsa Shrine with muddy feet, to say they were defiling it. That was how media depicted "Edsa III," if they depicted it at all. Mainstream TV stations tried mightily to ignore it, until the cable station of the Iglesia ni Cristo began beating them in ratings for being the only one reporting it. The e-mail forums were full of complaints by the "Edsa II" forces about the utter insanity of it. Filipinos in the United States were asking how a mob could be allowed to hijack democracy.

How could the *masa* rise to protect a leader who had been unfaithful to them? How could the *masa* rise to prevent a felon from being jailed? How could the *masa* be so stupid?

It is tempting to give in to these sentiments in times of great frustration. I myself can only thank my activist days for resisting that temptation. One of the profoundest ideas I learned from those days and have retained to this day, along with "serve the people," is that the masses are not stupid. It is people who say the masses are stupid who are. The masses are capable of learning, the masses are capable of achieving great things. To say they are stupid is to not understand them, to not know where they are coming from.

In fact it's not just the masses who are steeped in myth and illusion. Most of those who criticized them bitterly during "Edsa III" are trapped in their own myths and illusions too. The most patent of it—and the exact parallel of the masses' undying loyalty to Erap and FPJ—is their undying loyalty to Uncle Sam. Erap and FPJ have their movies, which show them to be larger-than-life heroes who will never abandon their wards. Uncle Sam has his movie-in-the-Filipino's-mind, which shows him to be a larger-than-life benefactor who will never abandon his ward, Juan de la Cruz.

Mention "Asiong Salonga" and "Ang Panday," and you conjure more than movies, you conjure a world of comradeship and *walang iwanan*. Mention Bataan and Corregidor, and you conjure more than history, you conjure a whole world of comradeship and *walang iwanan*. Erap patently mugged the poor who worshipped him, after vowing Erap *para sa mahirap*. Uncle Sam patently mugged Juan de la Cruz who fought side by side with him, tying up rehabilitation to "parity rights" while rebuilding the one country that made his life miserable for three years.

You say the masses are stupid, you have to say the Filipino in general is stupid.

But more than that, to what does the seeming stupidity owe? I cannot understand the logic that says the masses are stupid simply because that logic says we should expect rationality from irrationality, we should expect reason from unreason, we should expect enlightened behavior from people we keep in ignorance. The kind of poverty we have—a sprawling, teeming, vicious one and one that coexists with unbelievable wealth at the other end, in the hands of a few families—is insane, irrational, benighted. I cannot understand how we can keep people spectacularly deprived and suddenly expect them to scorn people who dangle out false hopes. You give people no hope, they will buy false hope.

In the 2001 elections, I helped in ABS-CBN's campaign for voters to vote wisely, but with not much enthusiasm. My problem with campaigns like this is that they always come a little late in the day. At the very least, voter education cannot start only shortly before the elections, they can start only shortly **after** the elections, or four years before the next one. At the very most, voter education cannot happen only by cajoling people to vote wisely, or scaring them into not voting for certain candidates, it can only happen by sending poor kids to school, so that they at least, if not their parents, can make an informed choice.

Elections are a wake-up call for the society itself. Or for the ruling class, the elite, or our leaders, however you choose to call them. Elections are a reminder that we are all in the same boat. You cannot let a leak swell on one side of the rowers thinking only they will drown when the boat sinks. Elections in that sense are not unlike the environment: You cannot keep razing the forests and poisoning the air and sea thinking the ravage will only afflict others. It will afflict you as well, or your children who will pay for your wantonness. We keep our society in this state, where the poor riot at the margins—literally: just go to Quiapo and Avenida Rizal and see for yourself—we will always have the Eraps and FPJs of this world to hound us come election time. The masses should see with their own eyes they are not good for them?

That is stupid.

No show at coronation

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A RADIO commentator put it quite succinctly, "The King was a no-show at his own coronation." Movie King Fernando Poe Jr. failed to show up at the Hotel Intercontinental yesterday morning where his adoption as official candidate of the opposition was proclaimed, so that former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who announced the nomination, was reduced to asking FPJ to please accept it. No explanation was offered for his second no-show. Earlier he also failed to show up at the businessmen's forum, sending instead Sen. Vicente Sotto, which disappointed the businessmen.

With his failure to show up (FPJ showed up at the Bulong Pulungan media forum last Tuesday, but he was with known politicians such as Raul Roco and Speaker Jose de Venecia), is he sending a message? Methinks either FPJ is having cold feet, fully aware that he is being pushed by politicians despite his lack of preparation for the biggest job of all, or he's leaving the door open for negotiations with Sen. Panfilo Lacson, his rival in the opposition, or even with the administration. *Nakakaawa din si* FPJ as he appears to be truly tormented.

* * *

By the way, there was a fleeting "political encounter" between President Macapagal-Arroyo and FPJ last Tuesday. She called up De Venecia on his cell phone while he was at "Bulong Pulungan" and they chatted for a while, after which JDV queried GMA, "Would you like to talk to Ronnie Poe? He's here with me." GMA said yes, and they spoke for about two minutes—quite cordially, says JDV.

* * *

While the fractious opposition is struggling to unite, the President is busy forging significant alliances. Yesterday morning at a gathering of political leaders in Cebu City, she practically sewed up political support for herself in the province which has the biggest number of voters in the country—from the six congressmen to Gov. Pabling Garcia, Vice Gov. John John Osmeña, and almost all the mayors. Cebu City Mayor Tommy Osmeña wasn't around, but I understand he's also in GMA's camp, although some kinks have to be ironed out with Lakas. The youthful Vice Governor Osmeña, in his speech, pointed out that such a gathering was the first time in a hundred years, since the time his great grandfather, the late President Sergio Osmeña, joined politics in 1902, that Cebu's political leaders were united. Except, of course, for former Gov. Lito Osmeña, Roco's key adviser, and Sen. Serge Osmeña who remains with PDP Laban. John John's alliance with GMA means that his dad, Sen. John Osmeña, is now with her too.

By the way, former Executive Secretary Oscar Orbos, co-host of the hugely successful "Debate" on GMA Network, has also left Reporma and is now supporting GMA.

* * *

At the media briefing by the Wallace Business Forum on the responses of 42 of the biggest multinational companies to the its annual survey (the 17th it has taken here), advantages and disadvantages of the local business environment were highlighted. No. 1 among the advantages is the English language proficiency, coupled with the good educational attainment and literacy, of the labor force. The chief executives of the MNCs stressed these must be sustained. No. 2 was the availability, quality and reliability of our labor force, which is related to factor No 1. These observations on the high caliber of the Pinoy labor force jibe with those made by Texas Instruments Philippines president Norberto Viera, the first Filipino to head this firm.

Some of the other advantages mentioned were the quality and quantity of middle management and technical people; their adaptability to Western culture and practices, and the comfortable lifestyle the country offers.

* * *

Topping the list of disadvantages are corruption, political instability, peace and order/security problems and bureaucratic red tape/mess. Also cited among the disadvantages were the volatility of the peso exchange rate which makes planning difficult, and the need to curb smuggling of fake products from abroad, such as fake DVDs and VCDs, and pharmaceuticals. It was pointed out that the MNCs lose as much as 30 percent of their market because of fake goods. Focusing on infrastructure is also deemed critical, especially the need to reduce power rates, which are the second highest in the region, next to Japan.

The WBF stressed the MNCs' sentiment about the critical importance of creating a Department of Information and Computer Technology, in order to handle the IT needs of the future. The WBF noted that this country can be at the forefront of the ICT revolution, and one indication is that the call center business here has been on the rise. Perhaps the creation of this department could be the pet program of Trade Secretary Mar Roxas if he is elected to the Senate next year.

* * *

I can understand why Beth Sison-Tagle, who produced the two successful "Salute" concerts featuring Cabinet members and the "Spice Boys," was quite hurt by the accusations of our colleague, Neal Cruz. Neal alleged that a lot of taxpayers' money went into supporting the concerts as a result of arm-twisting. I'd like to help disabuse Neal's mind, since I happened to be involved: Alay sa Kawal (ASK) Foundation, of which I am the founding trustee, was a direct beneficiary. The fact is that many people attended the concerts and paid for their tickets because they wanted to enjoy the shows and help good causes. "Salute 1's" earnings benefited the police force, while "Salute 2" will benefit the widows and orphans of soldiers slain or permanently disabled due to injuries sustained in battle. Close to 4,000 slain soldiers' families have been helped by ASK since 1986. Not a cent of public funds went into the "Salute" production and the government officials who participated were not paid a cent.

The little-known FPJ

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE PARADOX of Fernando Poe Jr. is that, for a man in such a public profession and of rarefied stature in the movie industry, he has managed to remain a private person. Beyond the sketchiest of biographical details—his parentage, the son of a famous pre-War actor who died early, and a teacher; his education, which because of his father's early death had to be cut short when he became a full-time actor; his filmography which consists of mainly tough-guy action films but also includes movies of serious intent, many of which he directed, as well as films that tapped a racial yearning for myth and mythic heroes—little else is known about this man who would be president.

We know that he is a heavy drinker, capable of out-drinking pals way into the early hours of morning in what seems to be his favored form of recreation: crawling from bar to beer garden in serial binges. But despite this history, he has managed to keep clear of controversy and the police blotter, though a columnist like Mon Tulfo, who certainly knows the night life and the drinking habits of celebrities, says even a mild-mannered man like "Da King" turns ugly when drunk.

We also know he was quite popular with the ladies, until his marriage to Susan Roces, then at the prime of her acting career. There are rumors of his having fathered at least one child with a sexy starlet, but unlike his best friend Erap, FPJ has been at least discreet and refuses to talk about personal matters no matter the provocation. And even when he does manage to let slip a few intimate details on the record, as Nestor Torre recounted in his story on what he calls "the longest interview in my professional life," FPJ manages to slam the lid shut once more by calling the writer the next day, pleading the right to privacy of the people he had talked about.

* * *

IN AN ARTICLE in the December issue of Yes, a glossy local show-biz magazine to which I have become addicted (I start craving for the next issue just midway through the current month), editor Jo Ann Maglipon quotes movie producer Cirio Santiago who put his finger on what makes FPJ the "legendary" figure he has become among his peers and subordinates in the industry. "He isn't there," Santiago says, which means Poe is rarely ever seen in public show-biz functions. While even established stars and super-mega-for-all-seasons stars make time to be seen and photographed in all sorts of events the better to keep in the public eye, Poe makes himself scarce. It's a big deal, indeed, to have Da King himself show up at your party or awards show.

Nova Villa, now a comedienne but who met Poe when he tapped her at 17 to be his "signature" leading lady, attests to the awe that his co-stars and production staff beheld FPJ, even when he was just a neophyte producer then and not yet "Ang Panday" in the flesh. He kept people at bay, she recalls, even then one did not just approach Poe for a handshake. He mostly kept to himself and his crew and co-stars quickly learned to wait for him to approach them for a little chit-chat between takes, and never vice-versa.

* * *

BY NOW we know, too, that Poe can be a little thin-skinned when confronted with criticism, legitimate or not.

Maglipon tells the story, now the stuff of urban legend, about a confrontation between FPJ and Franklin Cabaluna, at that time an acerbic but widely read movie columnist. The legend goes that, unhappy with Cabaluna's repeated dissing of his person and movie persona, Poe approached Cabaluna at a show-biz party, beat him up and then peed on him.

The reality, as recounted by Cabaluna himself, is that Poe merely took him on a typical drinking peregrination, all the while mouthing off on how Cabaluna had hurt people mentioned in his columns. From time to time while in an open-air beer garden, Poe would stop in his exhortations, approach a tree and pee on it. Which maybe explains the part on his being peed on by FPJ, Cabaluna said.

But the beating part is also based at least on a nugget of truth. Rushing to his "idol's" defense, a stuntman lackey of FPJ's walked up to Cabaluna one day and beat him so badly that the writer had to stay in the hospital for a few days.

If show business is rife with gossip, malice and black propaganda, politics is even dirtier and can descend to even lower depths of sleaze. Will FPJ be able to handle the potshots and criticisms, the sly innuendo, black operations of political handlers? Can he pee in public these days without this turning into a campaign issue?

* * *

WHAT else do we know about this man beyond the *chismis* and the legend?

His friends say he is at heart a decent human being. Of all the stars and celebrities who campaigned for Joseph Estrada in 1998, only Poe, they say, didn't ask the president for anything and, as accounts go, even returned the gift of a car (a rare model of a most expensive car) that Erap offered as compensation for his work during the campaign.

I'm even inclined to believe him when he says he was motivated only by a desire to help the country and to bridge the chasms in our society.

But his continued silence on the most crucial issues bothers me. As voters and citizens, we're entitled to know everything there is about a candidate or a public official. But for a man who craves privacy like FPJ, the first instinct is always to clam up, to hide, to be unseen.

It will be difficult to do that once one is president, and the way I see it, a man who cannot withstand being "out there" for the public to dissect, analyze and project into their biggest frustrations, not only does not deserve public office, he won't survive it.

'I talk to him in the wind'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

ON DEC. 25, 1985, a feature story I wrote came out in a weekly magazine. The story was about two young men, Ferdinand Arceo and Romeo Crismo. Ferdie was 21 when he was killed by the military in 1973, Romy was 24 and newly married when he disappeared in 1980. Ferdie and Romy were activists.

Ferdie's name is now among the more than 120 that have been engraved on the Wall of Remembrance at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani. He made it to the list of heroes and martyrs in 1993.

Romy has never been found. Yesterday, Human Rights Day, 23 years after his disappearance, Romy's name was finally included among the greats: those who risked their lives during the dreadful martial law years (1972 to 1986) so that freedom may be restored.

When I wrote the feature story 18 years ago, Romy had been missing for five years. Phoebe, his wife, was still searching for him. I am sharing excerpts from the Phoebe-Romy story, not in order to resurrect the pain, but so that many will remember.

"Five years, four months and one day." Phoebe has not stopped counting the days, the weeks, the months and the years since her husband Romeo, then 24, disappeared on Aug. 12, 1980.

Phoebe and Romy were a little more than four months married then. Their first months together were not exactly moonlight and roses, for right after the wedding Romy had to be rushed to the hospital. He had malaria and was bedridden for almost three months.

The couple got settled as husband and wife only in June 1980, three months after that standing-room-only wedding in March in Cagayan. By August, Romy was gone. "*Nawala, naglaho na parang bula.*"

For five years Phoebe went through labyrinthian ways in search of Romy. She has reason to believe her husband was taken by military operatives. Romy was once executive secretary of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship. He was active in the militant Student Christian Movement when he was a student. At the time of his disappearance, he was a teacher of accounting at St. Louis University in Cagayan. Romy knew he was being watched.

Phoebe was in Manila attending a seminar the day Romy disappeared. He was last seen on the school campus.

With her family and Romy's, Phoebe made the rounds of government institutions. The first few months were maddening. Phoebe worked on every lead, every hunch. Her hopes were high then. Many had been missing for a much longer time and surfaced later in some detention camp, tortured perhaps, but alive.

Phoebe, a deaconess of the Methodist Church, tried to muster enough faith. She prayed but sometimes she found herself saying, "God is not logical. He didn't create Romy just so he would disappear. It's cruel."

When she learned that a person thought he saw "the teacher from St. Louis" being taken to a hospital in a stretcher, she rushed over, pleaded with the hospital staff to please open "that one closed door." They refused to let her in so she got a government official to plead on her behalf. When the door was opened, "I saw a man lying there. There was a pair of Adidas under the bed." She found that strange.

Some people said they saw Romy in a military camp playing chess. Phoebe followed this up but she got no results. Once, she was roused from sleep by a cop who wanted her to identify a corpse in the morgue. The corpse turned out to be that of a pregnant woman. Phoebe was furious.

One day she just cried and cried. She was very angry. She smashed windows. Again she set out in search of Romy. She wrote First Lady Imelda Marcos and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Fabian Ver. They wrote back promising to look into the case. Twenty international groups, including the World Council of Churches and Amnesty International, wrote letters to the government.

"One time I went berserk in Camp Crame. The officer said, 'If we got Romy, *sa kakukulit mo,* we would release him.'" In the third year of her search she was told, "We don't keep people that long. Go, get married again." An officer said to her, "I envy your husband."

A bishop told her, "Romy is a smart boy. If he were somewhere he would somehow let you know." Phoebe knew what that meant. But she kept on. She consulted psychics and clairvoyants. She "traveled" with them. She saw Romy's motorcycle, rice fields, a cogon hut with a lamp inside. She saw a high pillow and a thick blanket. Romy was there, asleep. Halfway through the session, Phoebe started to scream and shake and she had to be "brought back."

"My mind says he is dead but my heart says he is alive. I drift. I cannot plan. I tell myself, he's gone, I should start a new life. But I have no proof that Romy is dead." She dreams of him. "I see him coming home with a backpack. He's ill, he's asking for help. Oh maybe these are just my projections."

Phoebe is 28 years old and working with the National Council of Churches. Long-haired and pretty, she has her share of admirers.

"I talk to Romy in the wind. Then I feel light. From the time Romy disappeared, I kept a diary. I wrote down everything that happened. I can quote exactly what I wrote, how I felt on that day, at what time. I thought then that if Romy came back I'd have a long story to tell, so I would just tell him, here read this."

* * *

This year's batch of Bantayog heroes lived long lives. Three of them died only this year. They are Rev. Cirilo Rigos (62), journalist Armando Malay (89), Bishop Antonio Fortich (89) and Sr. Christine Tan (72).

The martyrs died very young. They are Floro Balce (23), Alexander Belone (28), Romeo Crismo (24), Pedro Dungoc Sr. (38), Manolo Hollero (27) and Romulo Jallores (23).

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Rats and raves

YOUNG BLOOD

Adelfo Cyrus Alanis

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

SEVERAL weeks ago, I was unwillingly drawn into a conflict within the confines of my own home. The unseen enemy drew first blood, with mangled pieces of newspaper and old cloth, and that unmistakable gap on the wall—a prelude to the forthcoming devastation.

Confirmation that rats were living out of my generosity came with the sight of prized items dislodged from the trash bin almost every morning. These were not average rats judging from the droppings they left in the least visited locations. After weeks of tolerating their existence, subsequent events forced me to settle the score with these creatures from hell.

One night, I was roused by the sudden shrieking of my wife who was lying beside me. She said something "round, soft and heavy" had landed on her face. Reflexively she swiped the thing off, and claimed to have heard the thing land on the floor with a thud.

I told her she was just dreaming. But my disbelief dissipated after I reluctantly turned on the lights and saw what appeared to be smudges of blood on the floor. But I was still too sleepy to investigate, so I told her to go back to sleep with the assurance that the rat would not return for some time after that experience.

The pleasure of the "visit" was undoubtedly not hers. To her infinite relief, we concluded that it made the call after I forgot to wash my hands after dinner.

Aside from reacquainting me with the wisdom of personal hygiene, the incident made me seriously reflect on ways of countering the menace. I have two kids—mere toddlers—and I agonized over the possibility that they might be bitten by rats.

Before going to bed, I prepare enough bottles for the two kids' milk to last throughout the night. But one time I forgot to replace the caps. When the time came to feed them, I had to make an unscheduled trip to the nearest convenience store before we could appease their hunger.

That was the last straw. I did some research on rats in the Internet to know the enemy. I will not attempt to moralize on the issue of killing rats, but perhaps as an argument tending to favor the act, I have to cite conclusions made by several studies on the economic implications of rat infestation, particularly on grain production.

Rats, the destructive types, are in the same league as cockroaches and lice. They are everywhere and can be found even in the plushiest places. They are considered pests for three reasons: they consume and damage human foods; through their gnawing and burrowing habits they destroy many articles and cause damage to structures; and finally, they can transmit diseases.

In the Philippines, surveys conducted in small warehouses during the 1970s indicated losses of 40 to 210 kg of grain due to rats, or an estimated annual loss of $36 million. In early 2000, a rat plague caused significant crop damage in at least 30 towns in Samar, Northern Samar and Leyte. The Department of Agriculture put the loss at P4.6 million.

Rats should never be trifled with. They are nimble, calculating and deadly, and they have the numbers. One time I spotted three of them, medium-sized adolescents, running around the kitchen. I made my protest heard by crying, "Oy!" but the mischievous trio just ignored my towering presence and continued to scurry across the floor.

Rats are perhaps arguably the most numerous and widespread of mammals. In Britain, for instance, it was recently discovered that there are as many rats as people.

Dirty as they are, rats carry diseases. In Mozambique, the Bubonic plague is a yearly occurrence due to an overwhelming rat population. Rat urine and feces can easily find their way into our water and food. Diseases can also be directly transmitted through bites. Rat excretions and bites can cause anything from leptospirosis to fever and gangrene.

After knowing as much as I could about rats, it was time to confront the menace. Controlling the rat population involves certain activities that make use of the general principle of waste management. Frequent house cleaning is required to deny them an environment conducive to habitation. Also, rats thrive because of a steady supply of sustenance made possible largely by the misplaced charity of people who leave excess food out in the open, and the benefactor's reluctance to wipe spills and clean up unconsumed pet food.

But what if rats have already established their presence in the house? I have two kids, two dogs and a house of filth. I have no cat. I have also ruled out using poisonous chemicals since I am not about to indiscriminately put the innocent in harm's way.

I stumbled upon one website, Ratkill.com, which describes various methods of capturing and subsequently killing rats: from innovative traps to customized hunting rifles. But I was not willing to adopt some of the method, so I settled for a traditional spring trap, a 10 x 5 x 4-inch, rectangular, steel cage with a spring attached to the bait. For bait, I prefer a piece of bread heavily coated with peanut butter. Once the rat enters and makes even the slightest contact with the bait, the door clips shut, locking the prey inside.

I've caught three live rats in a single week using this crude device. The largest measured a good 14 inches from snout to tail. I could have taken pictures of my catch as proof but unlike someone residing in Malacañang, I was not inclined to catapult myself to the famed by engaging in sick photo-ops and parading society's scum before the whole world.

But alas, rats are able to learn from experience, and they know how to exact revenge. My catch considerably declined after the first week, and I have observed that rats have begun shunning the bait, even if I had switched to fried meat. Worse the enemy was hitting other targets: the edges of plastic Tupperware containers and—believe it or not—the lid of our old, unused refrigerator.

In Africa, a region weighed down by famine, calamities and civil wars, it is unsurprising that people eat rat meat as an alternative source of protein. The practice can also be found in some provinces in the Philippines. However, making rat patties didn't really appeal to me.

An eager neighbor suggested drowning as the cheapest method for disposing of the rodents (a method outlawed in some countries like Sweden). So I filled a deep bucket with water and amid its terrified squeals put the rat that was still in the cage in it. The scene was so appalling that I felt a considerable amount of guilt watching the thing helplessly gasping for air. The execution, which I've repeated several times, does not last a minute.

Ratkill.com runs several surveys, including one that asks what people feel after killing rats. Last time I checked, it showed that out of 210 respondents, 18 percent felt some form of remorse, while 16 percent felt "happy" about it. Curiously, 24 percent felt "orgasmic" after the slaughter. Out of 551 respondents, an overwhelming 85 percent felt rats deserved to be wasted.

Adelfo Cyrus Alanis, 26, writes during his spare time to make people smile. He writes full-time for the party-list group Bayan Muna.

Surviving holiday shopping

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

ISN'T it terrible that Christmas shopping can often seem like Lenten penitence? I thought I'd do my bit for mental health in the country by giving a few tips on getting your shopping done less painfully. Don't forget, you only have two weekends left.

I should preface today's column by saying that my objective is to get gifts that are ecologically friendly, utilitarian and, preferably, locally made. That means shopping less in shopping centers or malls. But if you must go to the malls—and they do have alternative shops, especially in the *tiangge* sections—do this early in the morning. The best reason to do this is that shopping's just generally more pleasant early in the day. As the day wears on, you have to deal with irritable, if not downright nasty, vendors and even nastier fellow shoppers.

The earliest birds get to negotiate for the best *buena mano* price. Vendors like to believe that the first sale they make will set the pace for the rest of the day. The larger the first purchase made, the better the *buena mano*, literally a "good hand" which means more big sales the rest of the day. You can therefore bargain with the vendors to give you the lowest price possible so you can buy more, which means a better *buena mano*. And I just love watching the vendors when they make their first sale, as they use your peso bills to "bless" all their merchandise, hoping the good luck from your good hand will spread.

Early birds get the best of the lot, whether clothes, plants or, most important of all, parking space. It's always a good feeling, too, when you're through shopping and you get to give up your slot for one of the millions of other buyers waiting for a slot. I will never forget how, last year, a visiting American friend actually got out of my car and roamed the parking lot waiting for someone to leave. At one point, she and another person spotted a car leaving. You should have seen the two of them jumping into the air and sprinting toward the slot, my friend screaming an offer to the other guy: "I'll pay you a hundred *pay-sos* for the space." You guessed it, not even a hundred *pay-sos* was enough for her competitor to give up his claim.

Another way to keep your sanity, especially while in the malls, is to find ways where you can get the most gifts in the least time. Gift certificates are the easiest way out, but there's something almost impersonal about them. There is, of course, one exception and it's bookstore gift certificates for children because they then get to browse through the store and choose what they want.

Bookstores are my favorite one-stop shopping place, although for a bookworm like me, there's always the danger that you will end up splurging on yourself rather than for friends.

Compacts discs—CDs, VCDs and DVDs—are another good bet. I am so encouraged by the growing number of educational Discovery videos (thanks to Magna Vision). These CDs make great gifts and I hope more selections will be made available. In China and in Thailand, you find a very wide range, the films all properly dubbed. The Chinese and the Thai know these CDs are in a way social investments, helping to boost scientific literacy among the young.

Are there alternatives to the malls? I think so. I haven't been able to go through the UP Village area this year, but I know there are quite a few NGOs and alternative crafts stores there. Instead of driving around desperately in the malls' parking lots, take a chance and cruise around UP Village to find the different shops.

Another alternative would be the "Scout" area in Quezon City, around Roces and Tomas Morato. First stop could be Popular Bookstore on Tomas Morato, closer to the ABS/CBN side. Then you can do Aklat Adarna, with their amazing range of young people's books. They're in a new office at JGS Building, 30 Scout Tuazon corner Dr. Lazcano, right across the original Max Restaurant. Lynn Almario, the owner, tells me they have a Christmas sale.

From there, you can actually walk to Kama, Kusina, Atbp., better known as Cardinal Ceramics. Their address is 32 Scout Santiago corner Dr. Lazcano. Excellent housewares there, including a gift pack of cacao *tablea* complete with the the traditional *batidor* and mixing bowl.

Greenhearts, on the corner of Scout Reyes and Mother Ignacia, could be your next stop. It has the widest selection of herbs imaginable, together with gardening supplies and really useful booklets on cultivating the plants. If you get herbs, you can request them to stick labels on the pot, with the plant's name and care instructions. Make sure, too, that you sign up for their e-mail service, which sends out herb gardening tips.

Move on to Roces Avenue to the Papelmaroti building. On the ground floor is the Papelmaroti shop where you get calendars, notebooks, wall décor and other "feel good" stuff. The second floor has a Books for Less shop, with both new and used books. If you purchase more than P250 worth of stuff you even get a voucher to get free coffee at their shop downstairs. Or, you could have lunch or dinner at Greens on Scout Santiago, which is a vegetarian restaurant that offers meals as well as bread, cookies and other organic foods that you can pack as gifts.

A final alternative, why not drop by the UP Film Center today, Friday or Saturday to catch Cine Veritas, with several films to mark Human Rights Day. Today at 7 p.m. they're showing award-winning "I-witness" documentaries "Selda Inosente," "Babalik na si Ma'am" and "Kidneys for Sale." Tomorrow at 2:30, 40 and 7 p.m. there's Ditsi Carolino's "Riles" about children growing up by the railway tracks. On Saturday afternoon at 4 and 7 p.m. there's "Magdalene Sisters," the controversial British film about how young unmarried Catholic girls in Ireland were incarcerated. At all these showings, they will be selling tapes of selected "I-witness" documentary features, again good holiday gifts.

CARTOON NETWORK
CHRISTMAS CONCERT
AT
ROBINSONS Malls
CARTOON NETWORK
NESTEA

CATCH THEM THIS DECEMBER

Watch your favourite Cartoon Network Characters LIVE in Concert!! Catch the cute crime-fighting trio perform their own versions of popular hits and danceable tunes with specially-choreographed steps for their concert debut. The Kindergarten superheroines will be joined by other Cartoon Network stars Dexter, Dee Dee, Johnny Bravo and Mojo Jojo to celebrate Christmas at Robinsons Malls.

POWERPUFF GIRLS LIVE CONCERT

4:00PM
Nov. 30 - Robinsons Place Sta. Rosa
Dec. 13 - Robinsons Place Imus
Dec. 14 - Robinsons Place Dasmariñas
Dec. 19 - Robinsons Metro East

2:00PM & 4:00PM
Dec. 6 - Robinsons Starmills Pampanga
Dec. 7 - Robinsons Place Novaliches
Dec. 20 - Robinsons Galleria
Dec. 21 - Robinsons Place Manila

POWERPUFF GIRLS MEET & GREET SESSION
Plus! Magic Show • Face Painting

2:00PM
Nov. 29 - Robinsons Place Iloilo

3:00PM
Nov. 30 - Robinsons Place Bacolod
Dec. 6 - Robinsons Place Cebu
Dec. 21 - Robinsons Place Lipa

Justice, not a lust for blood

IN THE NOV. 27 editorial of the INQUIRER, the title of the editorial "Lust for blood," referring to Chinese-Filipinos who are clamoring for justice for Betti Chua Sy and other victims of heinous crimes, was somewhat offensive and unfair.

We are a peace-loving people who don't "lust for blood," but we have the right to seek justice for the victims of heinous crimes, the punishment for which comes not from the Chinese community. It is provided for in the Revised Penal Code. No less than the justice secretary is for the lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty. Can the editors of the INQUIRER also call his opinion as a "lust for blood"?

What statistics do they have to say that the death penalty does not deter commission of crimes? Shortly after Marcos declared martial law, a Chinese national by the name of Lim Seng was caught manufacturing illegal drugs. He was sentenced to die by musketry. After his execution, crime rates in the entire country dropped to a record low and stayed that way for a long time.

The State is duty-bound to give justice to victims of heinous crimes like the case of Aileen Sarmenta, who was kidnapped and raped by an ex-mayor of Laguna and then thrown to his bodyguards to be gang-raped before she was shot to death. Remember also Charlene Sy, who was kidnapped, but was shot to death by reckless law enforcers while she was still inside the vehicle of the kidnappers. Together with the latest case of the kidnap-slay of Betti Chua Sy, their families cried for justice—they didn't lust for blood!

—L. ENCHONG SEE,
enchong@eudoramail.com

Implementing guidelines to SPV law not restrictive

WE would like to comment on the column written by Dr. Cielito E. Habito, titled "Why the SPV law isn't working." (PDI, 11/3/03)

In it, Habito attributed his perceived underwhelming response of banks to the SPV law to the implementing guidelines issued by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. He said that the guidelines are so restrictive as to virtually eliminate the attractiveness to banks of dealing with an SPV. He also stated that the Bangko Sentral requirement for banks "to provide loan loss provisions for the entire face value of the subordinated debt, staggered over seven years, even if the loan had been fully secured" makes the deal downright unattractive.

We believe that Habito was not well informed by his banker friends on the provisions of Memorandum to All Banks and NBQBs dated Sept. 26, 2003 on the accounting guidelines for the sale of non-performing assets (NPAs) to special purpose vehicles and qualified individuals under "The Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Act of 2002."

We would like to clarify that there is no provision in the Bangko Sentral memorandum requiring banks to put up an allowance for probable losses equivalent to the full face value of the subordinated note. What it actually requires is for the subordinated note to be periodically valued by the bank using international accounting principles, on the basis of which appropriate loan loss provisions will be set up.

Thus, there will be no instance where the required allowance for probable losses will equal the full face value of the subordinated note, except where the subordinated note is deemed valueless as determined by the bank and validated by its external auditor.

The required setting up of allowance for probable losses to reduce the carrying amount of a financial instrument to its estimated recoverable amount is consistent with the provisions of International Accounting Standard No. 39. It may be noted that the Bangko Sentral has even relaxed the rules by allowing banks to stagger the booking of allowance for probable losses over a period of seven years, subject to certain conditions.

We hope that this clarification will give readers a better understanding of the provisions of existing regulations, which are in fact meant to provide banks additional relief. We hope Habito will take the time to check for himself the provisions in question so he can make the appropriate conclusions.

In general, we believe that the bottom line in terms of the slow availment of the SPV law is the basic unwillingness of banks to recognize the underlying weakness in their portfolios. Unless banks move away from denial mode, then there would be limited progress, SPV law or not. The banks still have up to April 8, 2005 to transfer their NPAs under the SPV law. They should not waste the opportunity.

—ALBERTO V. REYES,
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A 'grotesquerie,' not a democracy

I FULLY agree with Conrado de Quiros' column last Nov. 14, 2003.

Yes, this country does not really have a democracy"; what we have is a "grotesquerie, called elite democracy"; and "what is not working in this part of the world is not democracy but half-baked democracy."

And I may add: what we have is a Philippine society, that in many ways is still a feudalistic society, with an elitist make up.

It is not the system of government that troubles or hampers the progress of the majority of the people. Were it not for our feudalistic and elitist society, the parliamentary or presidential system can do as either system works effectively in England, the United States and other countries that make them thriving and vibrant democracies.

Neither does the fault or deficiency lie in the way our Constitutions (1935, 1973 and 1987 Constitutions) were fashioned.

From independence in 1946 to the present, we have been proclaiming reforms or changes in society—but actually Philippine society has never changed: the poor still get poorer and the rich get richer. The French saying aptly applies to what has been taking place in our society: *"Plus ca change, plus c'est la même chose,"* the more it changes, the more it is the same thing.

—EDMUNDO H. ESCALANTE,
president, IBP Sorsogon chapter,
Gubat, Sorsogon

Not an FPJ fan

I WILL make this painfully clear and simple.

Fernando Poe Jr. is not fit to run for president. He is an action star, that's what he is. Granted, he's a very popular action star but more than this, nobody knows much else about him. Certainly, I've never heard of him doing anything remotely related to governing a country. So it makes me so mad I could spit nails that a lot of people actually want him to run for president. For the love of God, why? Someone, somewhere answered because FPJ is good with a gun. Can you imagine the size of the brain of such a person?

But this just goes to show that many of FPJ's supporters are monumentally stupid. Let's not mince words here. The Philippines is being plagued by idiots. It's a sad fact but there it is.

What really takes the cake is the number of supposedly learned people who support FPJ. I implore these people to stop this nonsense at once. The ignorant want him to run because they don't know any better. You senators, lawyers, legal advisers and other educated people, what's your excuse? *Maawa kayo sa Pilipinas! Tumigil na kayo!*

And to you, Mr. Poe, you say you can't be deaf to the clamor of the people. How about the clamor of your conscience? You must know deep in your gut you're not president material. What have you ever done in your entire life that makes you think you can be president? These people around you don't want you to run because of you, they want you to run because of them. Because they know once you're in Malacañang you'll be so out of their league you won't know heads from tails that you'll be forced to turn to your advisers and they will USE you for their own selfish ends.

It takes a strong and honorable man to know when he is in over his head and admit that he's not equal to the task. Be that man, Mr. Poe. Give this country a chance. Don't run for president.

—MARISSA P. VILLACORTA,
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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2003

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Aetas decry rights 'violations' by Army

ARLAN NAEG

AN AETA leader denounces alleged harassment by soldiers during a press conference on Tuesday.

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—At least 10 Aeta leaders of the Central Luzon Aeta Association (CLAA) in Pampanga and Zambales on Tuesday assailed Army soldiers for allegedly violating the rights of Aetas in those provinces.

The Aeta leaders appealed for the immediate removal of military detachments in their upland villages, saying they are victims of rights abuses.

Joseph Canlas, regional chair of the Anak Pawis party-list group, said the Commission on Human Rights had not intervened on behalf of the CLAA.

Among the violations cited by the Aetas were the soldiers' orders on banning the wearing of underwear and on the use of big cooking cauldrons, threats, illegal searches, seizures, harassment, arrests, false accusations and food blockades.

But Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, commander of the Army's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom), said he has not received information or complaints on the CLAA leaders' allegations.

Dominguez said he will order an investigation "as long as these are legitimate grievances."

"I want specific instances, (like) names of soldiers involved, so we can take action," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

The Army, in past reports, had considered the Pampanga-Zambales border an access route, if not part of the guerrilla fronts, of the New People's Army.

Sonny Serrano, CLAA chair, denied that the "militarized" Aeta villages were bailiwicks of the NPA. He also denied reports that villagers sympathize with the rebels.

Serrano said soldiers doing regular illegal searches in houses in Barangay Nabuklod, Floridablanca, had ordered the Aetas not to wear underwear.

"We were told that it was not part of the Aeta culture to wear underwear; that only NPA rebels usually wear these. (They said) those found in houses belonged to the NPA," he said.

Government troops, he added, were suspicious of the tribal practice of cooking food in big cauldrons.

"We have been prohibited from buying or using big cauldrons. They think we were preparing food for the rebels. We said it was our culture to prepare food in large amounts because the food is shared with members of the community," Serrano said.

Tomas Santos, an Aeta volunteer teacher, claimed that soldiers strafed his house on Nov. 7. He said he was accused of leading a command of 100 rebels.

Bienvenido Capuno, Barangay captain of Kamias in Porac town, said soldiers also set up a checkpoint leading to the village on Nov. 27-30.

Food supplies that *sakadora* (merchants) brought to Kamias in exchange for vegetables were blocked at the checkpoint, said Nelson Abuque, village councilman.

Pentagon gang tagged in car dealer's kidnap

COTABATO CITY—Police and military authorities yesterday tagged the dreaded Pentagon gang as responsible for Monday's disappearance of a Filipino-Chinese car dealer here.

The Pentagon gang, blamed for a series of high profile kidnappings in Central Mindanao, was being linked with the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Meanwhile, Mayor Muslimin Sema said the gang had contacted the family of Norman Sia.

"They confirmed they have Norman but I am uncertain whether there was ransom demand," Sema told the INQUIRER.

Sia, a 25-year-old bachelor, was selling his aunt's car to a group of unidentified men when he disappeared.

The car was later found abandoned in front of the Fitmart shopping mall in Tacurong City.

Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said a manhunt against the Pentagon gang has already been launched, particularly in Maguindanao.

The MILF, meanwhile, said it was helping in the operation against Sia's kidnappers.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said MILF chief Murad Ebrahim's order was part of the rebel group's confidence building measures.

"Right now, even though there is no coordination yet from our counterpart in the government side, we have started helping in the hunt for these kidnappers," he said.

Earlier, the MILF said it could only act against organized crime groups in the region after the government had finalized the guidelines of the joint communique of May 2002.

In the said communique, the MILF pledged to help in the government's campaign against criminality and terrorism.

Ghazali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said they decided to help in the Sia kidnapping even without the guidelines so the MILF could show its sincerity towards the peace process.

"We are assuring the government that we would assist and resolve the latest kidnapping in the region," Jaafar said.

Deputy Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Virgilio Leyretana said the MILF's help was long overdue.

Maj. Onting Alon, 6th ID deputy spokesperson, said the military could free Sia without the MILF's help. *Edwin Fernandez and Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

CHRISTMAS STREET

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

A resident of Barangay San Roque, Toril, Davao City installs her Christmas tree along the street as part of the city government-organized competition dubbed "Pasko Fiesta sa Dabaw."

ROUNDUP

2 dead in road accident

TABACO CITY—A motorcycle driver and his backride passenger died on the spot when they collided with a six-wheeler truck along the national highway in Barangay San Ramon here Friday. The victims were identified as seaman Francisco Coper, 31, and Boogie Realizan, 26, both residents of Purok 6 of said village. Ressurreccion Gaza, 39, of Barangay Binitayan, Malilipot town and the driver of the truck surrendered to police. Gaza said the victims suddenly appeared along the highway from a street that resulted in the collision. The motorcycle was totally wrecked.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Village official killed

LEGAZPI CITY—A village councilor was shot dead by two still unidentified motorcycle-riding gunmen on Sunday in Guinobatan, Albay. Police identified the victim as Henry Ocila of Barangay Magiron, Guinobatan. Ocila was attending a cockfight in Barangay Mauraro, Guinobatan when he was shot. The police were still conducting investigation on the identity of the suspects and the motive behind the killing.

Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Forest rangers slain

BALANGA CITY—Four forest rangers were shot and killed in an ambush by armed men in Mariveles town early Friday, police said. Reports reaching Camp Tolentino here identified the fatalities as Nhelian Arellano, Jimmy Gloriano, Eduardo Macayayong and Virgilio Fortuna, all members of the Mariveles forest protection unit. Seriously wounded was Rodolfo Alfonso. He was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment of bullet wounds. Reports said the forest rangers were going after a group of illegal loggers in the mountainous area of Mariveles when they were ambushed.

Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Latest HIV victims

ANGELES CITY—Two Filipino housewives and a male foreigner are the latest victims of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) here, the early stage of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). This city's social hygiene clinic, which conducts HIV test to some 600 mostly commercial sex workers, bar girls and guest relation officers, said one of the housewives acquired the disease from her foreigner husband. The foreigner could not be located for several days now, prompting health authorities to search for him to prevent him from infecting more people, especially bar girls and night club workers. The other woman found to be HIV positive is married to a Filipino. Health officials could not yet tell how she got the disease. Irish Calaguas, city information officer, said the clinic had monitored 60 cases of HIV since 1985.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Ordinance vs prank callers

TUGUEGARAO CITY—The city council passed an ordinance penalizing people who use emergency phone lines for prank calls. Councilor Efren Taguiam, chair of the council's committee on peace and order, sponsored the ordinance in response to complaints from police, fire department and hospital officials receiving prank calls, insults, threats and jokes through their hotlines. Taguiam said these lines should not be abused and should be only used for placing emergency calls. Offenders are fined P5,000 and may face a six-month prison term.

Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Suspects deny carnage

COTABATO CITY—Two of the eight suspects in the Nov. 27 pre-wedding carnage in Barira, Maguindanao have surfaced to clarify that they did not participate in the attack. Col. Eduardo Polintan, chief of the Army's 3rd Infantry Battalion, said Angal and Lakay Omar gave up on Sunday and told authorities they were victims and not among those who staged the attack on a prenuptial arrangement involving the Omar and Maricor families in Barangay Rumirimbang. Five people were killed while several others had been wounded in the said attack. "We were at the pre-wedding rite when armed men opened fire killing and wounding civilians in attendance," Polintan quoted Angal as saying. He said the military has taken custody of the two suspects. "They are under investigation by the military in order to get their side of the story, because what we've been hearing was only the version of the Maricor family members," Polintan said. The Maricor-Omar "rido" (feud) had intensified following the killing early this year of a Maricor family member in Manila.

Charlie Señnase, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Local officials threaten to auction off Mactan airport property

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Lapulapu City government has threatened to auction off the pieces of property owned by the Mactan Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA), if it failed to settle its real property taxes amounting to P255 million.

Lapulapu City Mayor Arturo Radaza served last month a warrant of levy for properties that included the airport's taxiway and the runway, to pressure the MCIAA to settle its tax obligation.

Radaza was accompanied by Vice Mayor Norma Patalinghug, and three other local officials in serving the warrant to the MCIAA.

MCIAA Public Affairs Manager Ahmed Cuizon admitted that the MCIAA management was now under pressure to pay the tax obligation.

But he said it was not up to the MCIAA management to decide but to the members of the authority's board of directors.

Radaza served the warrant of levy, a day after the three-day temporary restraining order lapsed on Nov. 10. The MCIAA asked Regional Trial Court Judge Benedicto Cobarde to extend the TRO but it was denied for lack of merit.

The court, however, had yet to resolve the MCIAA's main petition to stop the city government from issuing a warrant of levy against the MCIAA properties and from selling these in a public auction.

Korean faces charges for molesting 11 girls

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A Korean is facing 10 counts of acts of lasciviousness and one count of rape for allegedly molesting several 11 girls here.

The Cebu City Prosecutor's Office approved the filing of the charges against Jeong Keon Lee before the Regional Trial Court on Tuesday.

Charged with Lee in the 10 counts of acts of lasciviousness was Ma. Alona Sala, Lee's alleged pimp. Sala, Lee and Nimpha Belo were also charged with rape.

Acting Cebu City Prosecutor Jose Pedrosa said there was strong evidence against the accused to elevate the cases before the court.

While the victims had already filed affidavits of desistance, Pedrosa said they went ahead with the filing based on the provisions of Republic Act 7610 or the Child Welfare Act.

He said the victims might have been bribed in order not to pursue the charges against the Korean.

"This case gives a lesson to parents not to be trustful to foreigners. Their children should be made free from foreigners," he said.

Pedrosa upheld the six-page resolution of Assistant City Prosecutor Daphne Degoma, who gave credence to sworn statements of the 11 victims ages 13 to 17.

The affidavits were attached to the complaint as well as that of Tito Aguilar, Lee's former bodyguard.

In his affidavit, Aguilar said Korean and Sala lured the victims into joining a scholarship program but ended up being forced into satisfying Lee's sexual demands.

He alleged that about 30 minors fell victim to the modus operandi.

Based on the complaint, the 10 girls claimed that Sala asked them to meet Lee who offered to give them money and finance their education.

They were then told to go into a motel room where Lee would interview them. The police said it was during these occasions where Lee allegedly molested minors. Then, they said Lee gave them money ranging from P2,000 to P8,000.

A 17-year-old girl, on the other hand, claimed Lee raped her in April after she was brought by Belo and Sala to the Korean's hotel room.

In her affidavit, Gina (not her real name) said she accepted Belo's invitation to go to the hotel out of curiosity.

When she went into room, Lee allegedly pushed her to the bed and raped her while Belo and Sala were watching television in the other room.

Lee and Sala all denied the allegations, saying these were fabricated by Aguilar to extort money from them.

In her resolution, Degoma debunked their denial, as it failed to outweigh the testimonies of the complainants.

She said it would be up to the court to decide whether there was truth about the alleged extortion attempt by Aguilar.

"What is sufficiently established in these cases is the fact (that the) minors were subjected to sexual abuse as supported by their respective accounts and their medical certificates which indicated findings of disclosure of sexual abuse," Degoma said.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

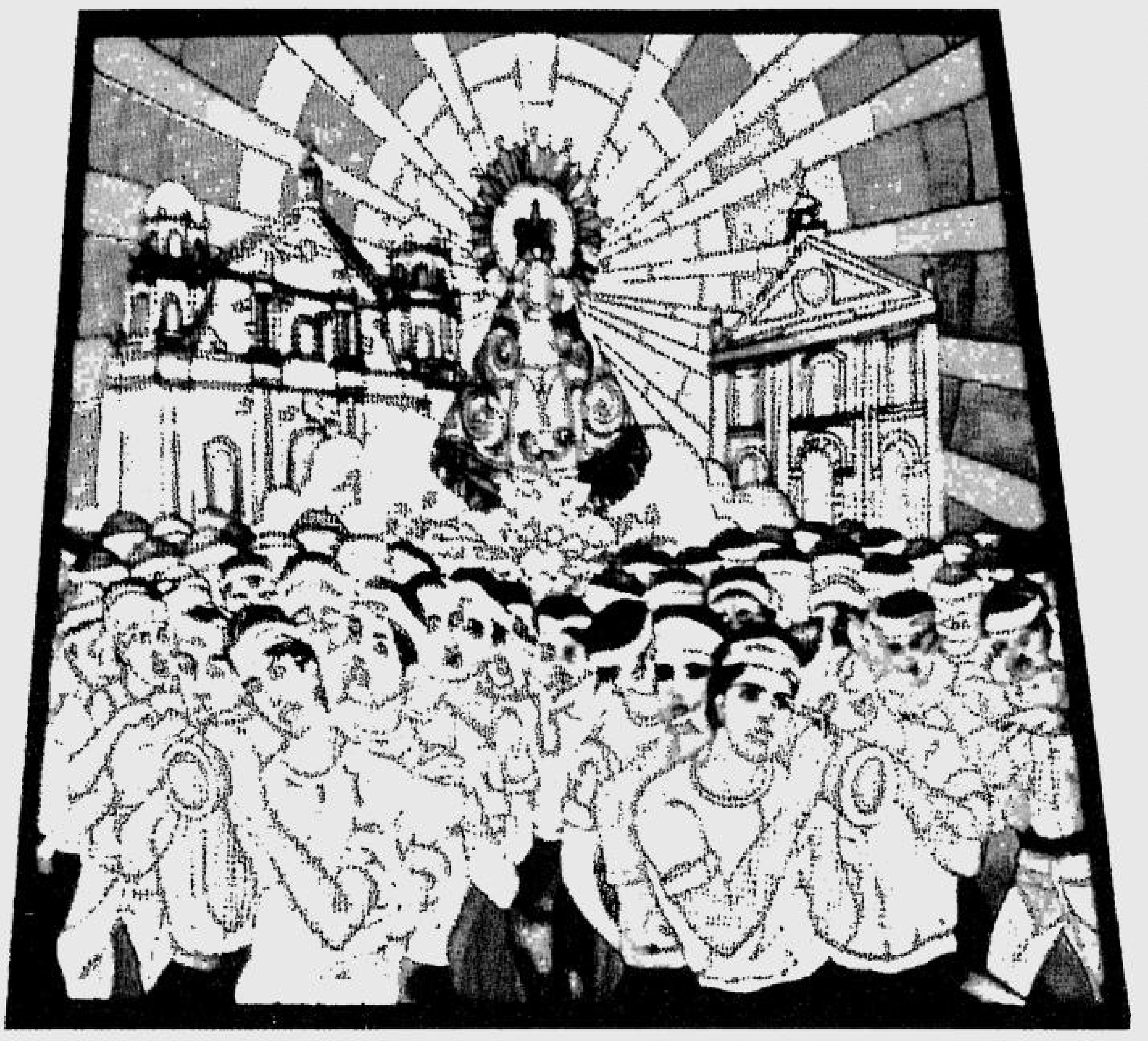
Artist wants to repaint Bicol image

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
Legazpi City

HE has received several awards, but Bicolano painter Pancho Piano, 49, known internationally as a stained glass artist and mural painter, still has other missions in life.

He wants to do more murals depicting the cultural, historical, political and religious aspects of Bicol, and pay homage and devotion to the Our Lady of Peñafrancia.

He also wants people to see the beautiful side of the region instead of too much politics, insurgency, corruption, "jueteng" and other negative things.



ONE of Piano's masterpieces.

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Good image

"My paintings became spontaneous because of Ina [Our Lady of Peñafrancia]. And because of that, too, I did believe that I had to go back to my roots and express the beauty and splendor of Bicol," he explained.

Piano has earned the titles of "Painter of Ina" and "Pinakapadabang Pintor kan Bikol (Most admired painter of Bicol)."

He said he was dissatisfied with the way people, and even some admirers, view Bicol culture. "*Masyadong mababaw at walang* (It's too shallow and no) substance," he said.

He said he was happy that his paintings serve as "*marhay na panalmingan* (good image) of hope and optimism."

Piano decried the tendency of the country's leaders to place priority on politics over the welfare of one's town, including its history, culture, and heritage.

Thus, he did not hesitate to accept an offer to work on 148 mural paintings on Bicol's history, culture and religious themes for Philippine and international clients, which he finished in 1986.

These earned for him an Ibalong award, as well as an award as outstanding Bicolano who excels in the arts given by the National Commission for Culture and Arts.

Grateful for his success as an artist, Piano dreams of giving scholarships to poor youths who have potentials of being painters.

"Just like National Artist Jose Joya, I believe that once I succeed, I'll also help. As I promised, I'm going back to my roots and it is through this that I can help the poorest among the poor students or out-of-school youths, to give them the chance to fulfill their dreams," Piano said.

Origins

Piano was born in 1954 in the coastal town of Lagonoy, Camarines Sur where he had worked as a newsboy, shoeshine boy and even as "*pintador*" (painter) of bancas since his elementary days.

"My company when I was a child was mostly the fishermen in our town. Sometimes I joined them in their trips since they loved my craft whenever I painted their bancas," he said. He painted seascapes on the hulls of their bancas.

But he admitted that he never enjoyed those times of his youth.

In high school and college, he had to work as a student assistant and had to apply for almost all scholarships available just to continue his studies, help his family, and, most of all, fulfill his dream to become a known painter.

"I did all kinds of printing and art job, from T-shirt printing to stage decoration and the like," he admitted.

Piano had to take an AB Economics course at the University of Nueva Caceres (UNC) in Naga City instead of a fine arts course since he could not afford to go to Manila.

But that didn't discourage him from continuing to craft his future masterpieces. A lot of work came to him unexpectedly.

"During that time, I became the number one contender of our school in every inter-school regional or national contest. I'm so grateful that somehow I made my Alma Mater, my hometown and my family very proud because I always brought home the bacon," he said.

Unforgettable experience

He shared an unforgettable experience when he joined one major painting contest.

"I didn't have any new and recent materials to use. All I had was my very old pastels, rotten brush, already wet cartolina, and even borrowed paint colors.

"I really did not want to join anymore since I came very late for I had to look for other tools to use, plus I had not eaten my breakfast then. But I never lost my focus. I proceeded to do my craft and kept thinking of my family and my devotion to the Our Lady of Peñafrancia. In the end, my perseverance paid off. I won the contest," he said, almost in tears.

In 1978, he finished his college degree, but could not find a job, causing him frustrations. But he was destined for greatness.

Six months after his graduation, Joya discovered him when the national artist visited the UNC to scout for potential artists.

He eventually qualified for a scholarship at the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts (UPCFA).

From 1984 up to 1987, Piano was able to get breaks at the UPCFA.

Opportunities

After numerous art exposures and contests, his talents amused and pleasantly surprised everyone, including foreigners.

"I had to do all the means and all my best to grab every opportunity in UP since those were the only chances and breaks I had. From the start, I had no confidence in venturing to more heights but I always thought of my family, and that was the only inspiration I had," Piano said.

As a student of Fine Arts, he won several major awards, including Most Outstanding Bicolano Artist and Outstanding Young Artist of the Year.

He also topped the art competition given by German artist Gerard Greissier, where there were more than 30 contestants.

From then on, he became the first internationally acknowledged leather artist. He had been commissioned to work on several mural paintings both here and abroad, two months before he graduated.

Piano disclosed that because of his achievements in UP, he was able to help his siblings finish their studies.

After UP, more opportunities and breaks came.

Shows

He has had 15 one-man shows and 35 group exhibitions in Japan, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vienna, Paris, Berlin, Brussels, Amsterdam, Milan, Rome and Manila.

His works have been featured in several popular art books both here and abroad, including the "Folk Influence on Modern Philippine Art" by Jane Stangle Apostol-Alvero of Peso Book Foundation 2002, which used one of his works as the front cover.

During his travels in Europe, Piano was glad that he was introduced by a fellow Filipino as an achiever, since many Europeans thought that most Filipinos working abroad were domestic helpers or those doing dirty work.

He was the first Filipino to exhibit in Glendale, California.

He has won 10 major awards in various Philippine and European art competitions from 1977 up to 1999. He was awarded Artist of the Year 10 times by various Bicolano institutions, both here and abroad.

In May, he sponsored a painting contest in the Camarines Norte High School. He now plans to sponsor every year an on-the-spot painting contest for the youth all over Bicol and by the next two years, to launch his first-ever scholarship for them.

PANCHO Piano will hold an on-the-spot sketching for "very affordable" rates on Dec. 15, 2-6 p.m. Those interested may visit the Gallery of the Albay Capitol in Legazpi City, where some of his works will be displayed up to Dec. 15.

6-day Bandana Festival kicks off in 425-year-old town

By Romy Ponte
Pangil, Laguna

THE LOCAL government and the Church in Pangil town in Laguna are joining hands in holding the Bandana Festival beginning this week, to commemorate the 425 years of establishment of both the municipality and the parish.

BANDANA Festival 2002 participants during the start of street dancing competition and procession.

ROMULO PONTE

Pangil, a fifth-class municipality situated some 120 km south of Manila, has a population of 20,000.

Mayor Sergio "Eyo" C. Manzana, the main organizer of the festival that was being held in coordination with the Parish Pastoral Council of Our Lady's Nativity Parish, said he had made special preparations for the event to be unforgettable for both parishioners and tourists alike.

Manzana, who recently garnered the Most Outstanding Mayor Nationwide Award, said he was willing to spend his own resources to ensure the success of the festival. The mayor is also a former Parish Pastoral Council president for 14 years before he was elected to public office.

The Bandana Festival is actually the parish church's celebration of the Feasts of the De La "O." Nuestra Señora de la O and St. Niño de la O are secondary patrons of the parish.

Former Pangil priest Jun Baria said there are no known duplicates of the De la O images anywhere in the country. Gifts from King Carlos of Spain, they show a different image of the Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus.

2 images

The life-size Nuestra Señora de la O symbolizes the Blessed Mother heavy with the Child Jesus. When one views the image closely, the Virgin's hand expresses amazement while her beautiful face looks intently beyond.

The Santo Niño de la O, on the other hand, depicts the Child Jesus in the womb of Mother Mary. Thus, it is hoisted on a wooden pole, with a silver circle representing the womb.

Both images are also considered miraculous. The Nuestra Señora de la O, in particular, is known to help women who are having difficulty getting pregnant.

But what does the "O" mean? There are many conjectures, with the most popular being that the title was derived from the Latin antiphons and exaltations intended for the Virgin Mary during December. These antiphons start with "O," such as: "O Maria! O Virgines Pulcra! O Mater Nostra!"

Traditionally, the recitation of the rosary and singing of exaltations are offered to the Nuestra Señora de la O, while the Santo Niño de la O is danced inside the church to the tune of the children's Latin song "*Dic mihi*" and played to the beat of drums. The celebration is referred by many as "OO."

The Latin song numerically describes the important teachings of the Church from one to twelve. It is said that every native of Pangil, even non-Catholics, knows the tune by heart.

Street dancing

The bearer of the Santo Niño de la O during the annual feast day procession is considered a position of privilege for which people line up for years. For instance, the name listed in year 2000 will have to wait for the year 2015 for his turn to carry the Santo Niño.

In January 1999, the parish started dancing the Santo Niño de la O in the streets in a Grand Pa-OO Festival, waving pine tree leaves while dancing.

Church documents show that the first Church of Our Lady's Nativity was built by early missionaries Fray Juan de Placencia and Fray Diego de Oropesa in Barangay Sulib in 1579. The church that was made of bamboo was destroyed by earthquake and storms.

In 1611, a church made of stone and a convent was built under Fray Gonzalo del Robles. At that time, the church was known as the biggest in Laguna.

The convent remains a historic place for one memorable reason: it was host to Prince Carlos III of Spain in 1743, who stayed in Pangil for three years and spent some time hunting in the forest and swimming in the river.

In 1759, the prince returned to Spain. Then in 1764, he was crowned King Carlos III after the death of King Fernando VI, his stepbrother to his father, King Felipe V.

Festival activities begin as early as Dec. 8, with the bandana art making contest, followed by a motorcade to kick off the celebration of the founding of Pangil on Dec. 14.

Activities

The Palarong Bandana follows on Dec. 15; "Sundo Sa Sto. Niño de la O" and Bandana Art & Painting Exhibit on Dec. 16; and the Marian Exhibit and Night of Marian Music on Dec. 17.

The Bandana Festival will be capped by a Concelebrated Holy Eucharist in the parish church at 7 a.m. on Dec. 18, to be presided by Pangil native bishop Most Rev. Leo Drona, SDB, DD. Assisting him will be Pangil-born priests and religious, including scores of clergy members who have served the municipality as priests and the like.

After the Mass, the grand procession of the pregnant blessed mother Nuestra Señora de la "O," the Sto. Niño de la "O" and street dancing along the town's major thoroughfares will be held. The street dancing is characterized by chanting of hymns in honor of the Blessed Mother and Infant Jesus of the "O."

THE AUTHOR is the parish priest of the Our Lady's Nativity Parish.

FOUR DIGIT
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(In exact order)
SUERTRES
6 4 4

MEGALOTTO 6/45
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METRO

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Abelardo S. Ulanday**

PNP: Drug lords turn to mini-labs for shabu

By Christian Esguerra and Tina Santos

POLICE yesterday seized shabu ingredients and equipment during an early morning raid of a "satellite" illegal drugs laboratory in Guiguinto town in Bulacan.

Armed with a search warrant for Chinese Li Liang Lee, members of the Bulacan police and the Central Police District stormed the compound of one Jaime Chua on M.E. Ilang Ilang Street, Barangay Tiaong at around 6 a.m.

Authorities did not find the alleged operator Li, but they did arrest the caretaker, Israel Cruz, 24. Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, police director for Central Luzon, said drug syndicates have come up with a new "tactic" in the wake of government's relentless drive against illegal drugs.

Querol said that the drug lords are now putting up "satellite or mini drug laboratories"—like the one in Guiguinto town—so they could cut huge losses in revenue resulting from the closures of shabu mills.

"Before, (the drug lords) would normally create big drug labs," Querol told the INQUIRER.

But they soon realized that it would cost them too much to operate a drug laboratory that might fall in government hands, the official added.

"So now come the satellite labs," Querol said.

Senior Supt. Felizardo Serapio Jr., Bulacan police director, also said the laboratory was put up to replace the shabu facilities that had been closed down by government.

Authorities are convinced that several mini laboratories are now operating in Metro Manila and nearby provinces, Querol said.

He added the Guiguinto facility was an extension of the drug laboratories discovered in Antipolo and Pasig City more than two weeks ago.

The Guiguinto raid yielded over P20 million worth of shabu ingredients and equipment, along with 5 kilos of the finished product, according to Supt. Arnold Gunnacao of the Bulacan police.

For two weeks, CPD lawmen had been watching the illegal drugs facility, CPD Director Chief Supt. Napoleon Castro said.

Castro said his men had even rented a house beside the facility last month to better monitor the activities there.

Quoting neighbors and the caretaker, Querol said suspect Li had set up a bakery and a noodle manufacturing and repacking area in the compound to conceal his illegal business.

The arrested suspect, Cruz had told policemen that a Mr. Cheng of Antipolo City had hired him to work at the shabu laboratory. *With reports from Carmela Reyes and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

NCRPO, MMDA join hands to restore order in the streets

By Margaux Ortiz and Edson Tandoc Jr.

INSTILLING order and discipline in the streets will no longer be the sole business of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday announced that the agency and the National Capital Region Police will be linking up for the "Disiplina sa Bangketa" program, in line with the regional police's recent directive to the men to "pound the pavements" of the metropolis.

Fernando said that NCRPO Deputy Director General Ricardo De Leon has been ordered to ensure police visibility in the streets to check the rising crime rate in the metropolis.

In the agreement, policemen on beat patrols will have to work hand in hand with MMDA enforcers.

De Leon said patrolling lawmen will also aid enforcers in sidewalk clearing operations.

"The PNP and the MMDA are both agencies on the road so we felt the need to assist each other," Fernando said.

FIVE of the six men accused of kidnapping two Filipino women in 1998 look dazed and sullen after a Manila court found them guilty of the crime and sentenced them to death.

ERIK ARAZAS

6 sentenced to death for '98 abduction

By Tarra Quismundo

SILENCE, bowed heads, and blank faces.

This was how six men, including a former policeman, took the news of their death sentences after a Manila court found them guilty of kidnapping two Filipino-Chinese teenagers exactly five years ago yesterday.

Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 27 Judge Teresa Soriaso meted out the death penalty to Carlos Ruiz, 61, a Palawan policeman for 29 years; his nephew Joel Ruiz, 24, a painter from Quezon City; Dick Esrael, 38, from Caloocan City; Ramil Olivar, 34, of Quezon City; Nestor Boyonas, 33, a vendor from Tondo, Manila and Rosalino Demelletes, 33, a taxi driver from Quezon City.

On Dec. 10, 1998, the six men kidnapped Mary Grace and Michelle Yao and demanded ransom for their release. The sisters were rescued eight days later by members of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force in a resort in Calatagan, Batangas.

"We are very happy," said Teresita Ang-See, spokesperson of the Citizen's Action Against Crime. "This case shows that evil does not triumph."

Ang See's group had helped set up the PAOCTF, operations which led to the arrest of the men.

Yesterday's death conviction was the first handed down by a Manila court since President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the moratorium on death penalty.

Militants get bruised, scratched, wet on Human Rights day

By Leila Salaverria

MILITANT group members yesterday got wet, scratched and bruised during police dispersal operations at the Chino Roces bridge in Manila.

The frontliners of the 1,000 protesters from Bayan, Anakbayan and Kilusang Mayo Uno, including party list Rep. Crispin Beltran and Selda's Marie Enriquez, were soaked to the skin when members of the Western Police District trained their water cannons on the militants to prevent them from marching on to Mendiola at around 11:30 a.m. yesterday.

The protesters held the march to mark the International Human Rights Day.

Bayan spokesperson Renato Reyes said the dispersal took place after negotiations between the group and the police bogged down.

"It was Human Rights day and we wanted to exercise our rights, but the police did not want to let us march," Reyes said. "We cannot let their disapproval stop us from exercising our right to free speech, especially on this day."

Reyes said around 30 of their members also suffered cuts and bruises when they faced off truncheon-wielding lawmen for about 30 minutes.

None of the protesters were arrested. After the scuffle, some of the militants were able to slip past the police and continue on to Chino Roces bridge.

Reyes also said that their members would return the nightsticks and truncheons which they were able to seize from the policemen.

P02 Arvin Valenzuela said the police had to disperse the protesters because they had no permit to hold a rally. He added that water cannons were used because the policemen on Nicanor Reyes street numbered only 50 and could not take on the protesters.

Robot's capture: Aventajado worried

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

ROBERTO Aventajado, presidential adviser on flagship projects during President Erap's administration, is probably having sleepless nights lately.

He must be praying hard for the death of Ghalib Andang, alias Commander Robot, who was captured alive by government troops a few days ago.

Robot was seriously wounded and military doctors are trying their darnedest best to make him live.

If Robot lives, he can make life miserable for Aventajado, as well as local officials in Sulu, at the time of the negotiations for the release of the European hostages.

* * *

Don't you find it suspicious that after the capture of Robot, Aventajado comes out with his own account of the negotiations in a book entitled "140 Days of Terror"?

That's too much of a coincidence.

Observers say that Aventajado wants to preempt or dilute the stink Robot would spread in the Sipadan hostages negotiations. *Inuunahan na ni* Aventajado *si* Robot.

* * *

I've followed the negotiations for the Sipadan hostages in 2000 very closely through my friend, Zamboanga City businessman Lepeng Wee.

Erap designated two government negotiators for the release of the employees and guests kidnapped by Abu Sayyaf terrorists from a resort hotel in Sipadan, Sabah. Aventajado was to deal for the European hostages, and Wee for the Malaysian kidnap victims.

While Wee fast-tracked the release of the Malaysian hostages—even dipping from his own pocket—Aventajado pussyfooted.

* * *

Aventajado so jealously guarded his designation as negotiator for the Europeans that he told Erap to disallow Wee to talk also for the European hostages.

While the negotiations were ongoing, rumors were already spreading that Aventajado and some Sulu officials were skimming off ransom payments for the Europeans. The ransom money came in tranches.

I was incredulous at first over those rumors. But I became suspicious when I had dinner with Aventajado at the Old Manila restaurant at the Manila Peninsula Hotel. The dinner was arranged by a PR man who happens to be a close friend.

* * *

During dinner and in the midst of our conversation, Aventajado was handed a satellite phone once or twice by his aide.

Erap's favorite Cabinet member excused himself and talked with the guy at the other end of the line.

I saw that Aventajado was chummy-chummy with the guy at the other end of the line. I saw him laughing and smiling.

Returning to our table, Aventajado boasted that he had just talked with Robot.

One wonders what he and Robot were talking about, and why he was so chummy-chummy with the Abu Sayyaf leader.

Fires break out in Pasay, QC

By Margaux Ortiz and Tina Santos

TWO FIRES yesterday broke out in Quezon City and Pasay City.

The fire in the vicinity of F. Angeles Street, Pasay City, destroyed about 50 semi-concrete houses in a residential area.

The blaze, which at 4:45 p.m. reached task force delta less than an hour later, according to SFO1 Vicente Godinez.

He said firefighters were able to control the blaze at 6:05 p.m. The fire was put out at 7:30 p.m.

At press time, arson investigators were combing the area to determine the cause of the fire, Godinez said.

Fire officials pegged property damage at P10 million.

In Quezon City, a fire of undetermined origin yesterday hit a row of commercial establishments along Quezon Avenue near Pantranco.

Fire officials said the blaze broke out at the Lucky One Club bar at 5:15 p.m.

Investigators said the fire then spread to adjacent houses and establishments, including an auto supply shop.

Arson investigators said that at 5:31 p.m., the blaze had reached task force alpha alarm.

At press time, firefighters are still trying to control the blaze. Investigators said no one was reported injured in the fire.

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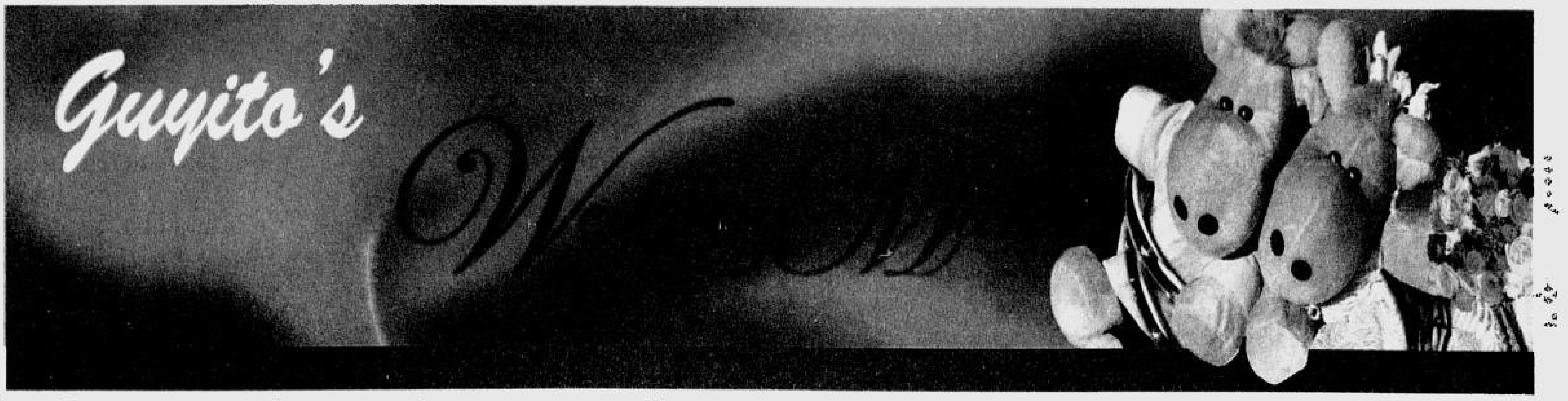
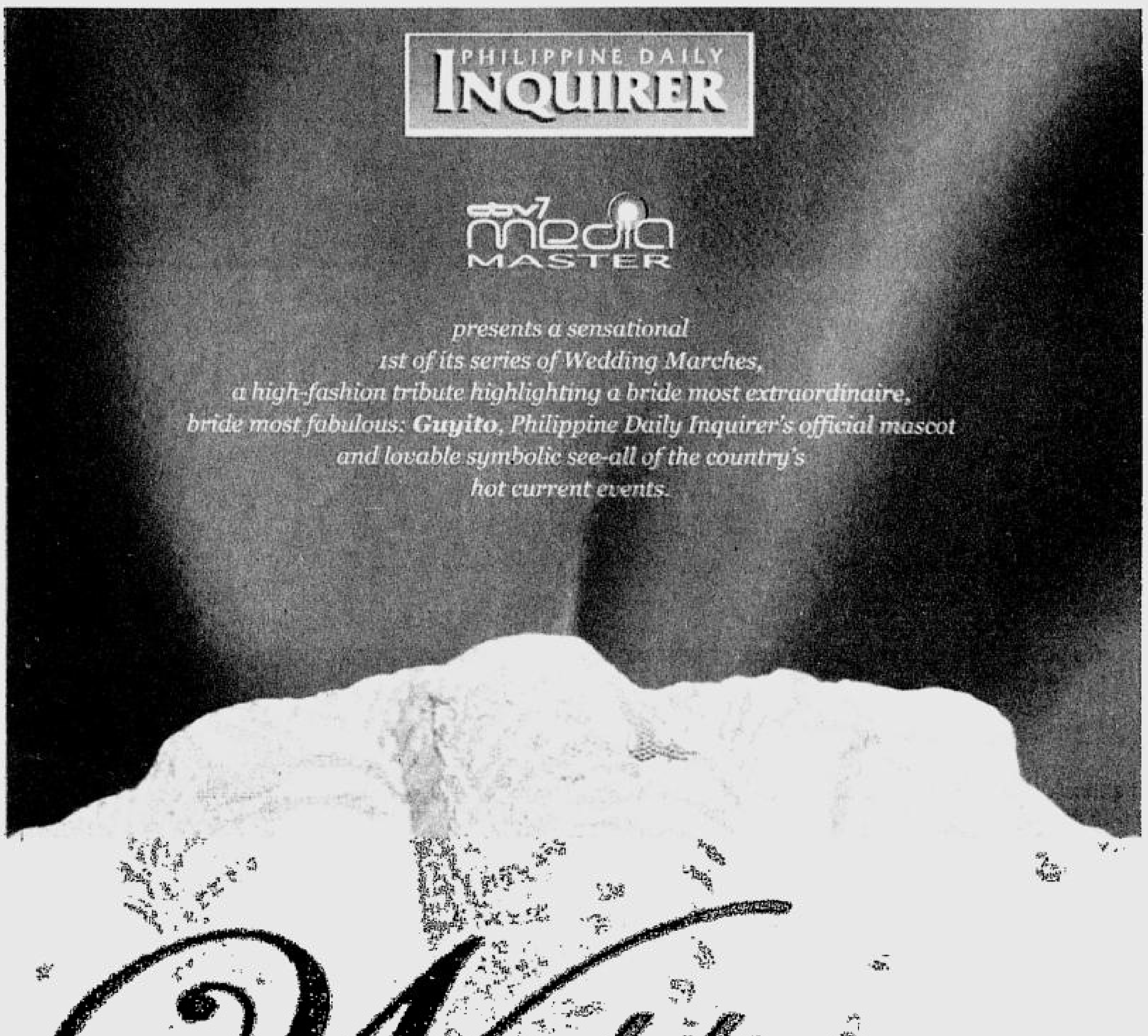


Dress-Up Guyito Contest

From December 1 to 26, 2003.



presents a sensational
1st of its series of Wedding Marches,
a high-fashion tribute highlighting a bride most extraordinaire,
bride most fabulous: ***Guyito****, Philippine Daily Inquirer's official mascot*
and lovable symbolic see-all of the country's
hot current events.

Wedding March

at Glorietta

Jan. 10 & 11, 2004
Glorietta Activity Center, Makati City

FEATURING

- ***On Exhibit***
  Guyito in Haute Couture bridal gowns by 10 of the Philippines' top fashion designers: ***Ben Farrales, Inno Sotto, Patis Tesoro, Eddie Baddeo, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel, Frederick Peralta, Jajie Lloren, Bobby Novenario and Eric Pineda***
- ***Dress-Up Guyito Wedding March Contest***
  In cooperation with Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the major activities of this event is this competition to dress up Guyito, PDI's official mascot. Please see contest mechanics below.
- ***Accoustic Night***
  A free concert featuring: Jimmy Bondoc, Paolo Santos, Nyoy Volante and Nina
- ***Raffle Draws***
  Open to suppliers/exhibitors and couples/guests
- ***Wedding & Trade Fair Exhibit***
  Showcasing the country's most prominent establishments

Dress Up Guyito Wedding March Contest Mechanics:

1. *The contest is open to all aspiring amateur designers 18 years old and above.*
2. *One pair of Guyito doll entitles a contestant to one entry form. The dolls must be purchased by the contestant starting* ***Dec. 1 to Dec. 26, 2003*** *from the Philippine Daily Inquirer main office at:*
   Philippine Daily Inquirer Building
   Don Chino Roces Avenue
   cor. Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
   Each pair costs ***P350.00.*** *A contestant may submit as many entries as he/she wants.*
3. *The contest theme is "Guyito's Wedding March". A contestant is tasked to dress up the doll pair in wedding ensembles (as bride and groom) of his/her own design. No perimeters shall be set with the design.*
4. *Criteria for judging will be based on the following: Relevance to Theme (30%), Originality (30%) and Creativity (40%). Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbv7 Media Master will be present during the judging of the contest.*
5. *Deadline for submission of entries is on* ***Dec. 29, 2003, 9am to 6pm*** *at the Philippine Daily Inquirer Head Office Marketing Department. Look for Hazel Soriaga and Masoy Cabuhat.*
6. *Judging date will be on January 5, 2004 at Philippine Daily Inquirer main office in Don Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo), corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City at 2pm. A DTI representative shall be invited to witness the selection of the winners.*
7. *Winners will be notified thru phone, registered mail and will also be published in Philippine Daily Inquirer.*
8. *All winning entries shall automatically become the exclusive property of PDI and may be used, copied, reproduced into any size or medium for exhibition, advertising, promotion, or similar purposes. All non-winning entries will be returned to the contestants after the awarding ceremonies.*
9. *PDI reserves and maintains all intellectual property rights.*
10. ***Prizes as follows:***
    1st prize : P15,000 cash
    2nd prize : P10,000 cash
    3rd prize : P5,000 cash
    All cash prizes are tax free.
11. *All winning entries will be displayed during the Wedding March at Glorietta in Makati City on Jan. 10, 2004. Awarding will be done on Jan. 10, 2004 at 7pm. Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbv7 Media Master will be present during the awarding.*
12. *Winners must present any valid I.D. (driver's license, passport, or any I.D. with picture) when claiming the prize.*
13. *The decision of the Board of Judges of the Dress Up Guyito Wedding March Contest contest is final and unappealable with the concurrence of the DTI.*
14. *Employees of PDI, cbv7 Media Master, their advertising agency, dealers, all participating outlets and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguity or affinity are disqualified from joining this promotion.*
15. *Only entries received until Dec. 29, 2003 are qualified for the contest. A participant can send more than one entry but can only win once.*
16. *PDI and cbv7 Media Master reserve the right to publish or display any entry, winning or non-winning, for promotional purposes, without permission or payment of any kind to the owner of the Guyito doll.*

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-641, Series of 2003

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Event Stylist: ***Rachy Cuna***

INTENSIFIED POLICE PATROLS

Robbery suspect slain in shootout

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

AN ALLEGED robber was killed while an accomplice, a policeman and a soldier were wounded during a foiled robbery along the McArthur Highway in Valenzuela City yesterday afternoon.

Manuel Maturan died on the spot after he and alleged cohort Raul Dacala shot it out with a joint police-military anti-crime patrol.

According to investigator SPO2 Jess Sagisi, driver Simplicio Larazi, 53, and company secretary Tita Hernani, 30, of the S&L Meat Dealer, withdrew P150,000 from a bank in Marulas at about 2 p.m.

According to Larazi, they had just left the bank and were on the company owned Isuzu Trooper when Dacala, who was armed with a pistol, knocked on the window on the passenger side, where Hernani was seated.

In front of the Trooper, Maturan was on a motorcycle, blocking their path.

The suspect reportedly threatened to shoot so Hernani was forced to open the window. Dacala then asked for the bag of money.

Before leaving, Dacala reportedly fired several shots into the vehicle's floor as a warning.

The gunshots, however, caught the attention of the joint police-military patrol who were patrolling along the highway.

Policemen, accompanied by Cpl. Adrian Aspiras of the Marines, chanced upon Dacala as he was getting on the motorcycle driven by Maturan.

Upon seeing the lawmen, the suspects opened fired, hitting Aspitas in the groin and PO1 Rolly Fernandez in the left leg.

Bystander Rolly Vergara, 44, was also hit in the chest.

A shootout ensued and ended with Maturan dead on the road.

Dacala, who was shot twice in the chest, was still alive and was brought to the Our Lady of Fatima Hospital, where he was last reported in critical condition.

The other wounded were also treated at the same hospital.

Valenzuela City police director Jose Marcelo later told the INQUIRER that Maturan was also a suspect in the robbery at a beer warehouse in the city in 2002.

Maturan is also being eyed in another robbery in Meycauayan where three policemen were killed.

On Monday, the National Capital Region Police Office and the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force launched an intensified anti-criminality campaign.

The drive entailed the setting up of police chokepoints or stationary checkpoints at 11 entry points of Metro Manila.

Mobile checkpoints and intensified police patrols were also enforced.

To add teeth to the campaign, the Armed Forces sent 1,000 soldiers from the Army and the Marines to reinforce the 10,000 policemen in the National Capital Region.

Earlier, six alleged car thieves were also slain after these were reportedly tagged at a checkpoint in Manila.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said the incident was proof of her resolve to stop crime.

THE BODYGUARDS
Lawmen present to media (from left) Arsenio Inocentes, Victorino Yap, Rodolfo Ramos and Danny Boy Despi, who were arrested at a checkpoint in Parañaque City for allegedly carrying two unlicensed .45-cal pistols and an M16 rifle. They are reportedly bodyguards of a Cavite vice mayor. VAL HANDUMON

Non-PMA lawmen unhappy

By Margaux Ortiz

POLICE officers who are non-alumni of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) yesterday said that a dialogue set to address their complaints of favoritism and corruption in the police force was met with mere promises.

"*Walang nangyari* (nothing happened), all we got were promises," said Director Lucas Managuelod, president of the Police ROTC Graduates for Integrity, Morality and Order (Primo).

Primo members again met with National Police Commission officials yesterday to look into their grievances.

But Managuelod said, "They said they would look into this and into that and issue more memoranda when we have enough of those already. The problem lies in the implementation."

LRT extending operating hours

DUE TO the holiday season, the Light Rail Transit Authority will be extending the operating hours of the LRT Line 1 by 30 minutes from Dec. 15-23.

The last train from the Baclaran station will leave at 9:30 p.m., instead of its regular 9 p.m. departure.

The last train from the Monumento terminal, on the other hand, will depart at 10 p.m. instead of 9:30 p.m.

However, on Christmas and New Year's eve, the last train from Baclaran will leave at 7:30 p.m. while that from Monumento will depart at 8 p.m. *Abigail Ho*

METROBRIEFS

Complainants 'disappear'

THE MANILA Regional Trial Court cleared yesterday Alex Mendoza and Simon Labong, both of Parola Compound in Tondo, Manila, of car theft and robbery charges after the complainants failed to appear in court. In July 2002, mother and son Aurora Francisco and George Young Francisoo accused the two of driving off with their Mitsubishi Adventure and P400,000 worth of jewelry. After two years of trial, however, the Franciscos reportedly did not testify in court.

Tarra Quismundo

Ma, baby escape death

CHARISMA Dayton, 22, and her 1-year-old daughter escaped unhurt after unidentified suspects fired shots at them in front of their house on Mockingbird Street, Makati City, at about 8:30 p.m. Wednesday. Two companions of Dayton, Arman Taculod, 27, and Erick Marikit, 21, however, suffered gunshot wounds. *Margaux Ortiz*

Vendor gets 12 years

BALUT vendor Ricardo Roxas of San Juan Bautista Street, Campsite, Payatas, Quezon City, was sentenced yesterday to 12 years in prison for killing lawyer Isidro Moral Jr. on July 4, 1999. Judge Monina Zenarosa of the QC Regional Trial Court Branch 76 convicted Roxas on the testimony of Leonardo Roldan, who came forward three years after the incident. In his testimony, Roldan, a neighbor of Roxas, said he saw the latter stab Moral but decided to keep quiet about it until July 4, 2002. *Tina Santos*

Suspect in UP slay freed

ONE OF the four suspects in the slaying of University of the Philippines student Niño Calinao on Feb. 19, 1999 was ordered released by a Quezon City judge for lack of evidence. Rizal Saari Lamsaani of Tandang Sora argued that prosecution witnesses UP security guard Lina de Castro and Rita Santing failed to identify him as one of the suspects. QC Regional Trial Court Branch 219 ordered Lamsaani's release. *Tina Santos*

Cop in shooting named

ONE OF four men who shot at mourners at the wake of Central Police District director Napoleon Castro's mother-in-law in Manila has been identified as Domingo Alagde, a policeman recently reinstated after reportedly being dismissed for indiscriminate firing. Supt. Rodolfo Llorca, Western Police District Station 7 director, named Alagde. *Leila Salaverria*

Advent on the Hill

BUKAL ng Tipan—a pastoral training center—is inviting everyone to a one day Advent recollection on Dec. 13 at the CICM Maryhill Compound, Taytay, Rizal. Dubbed "Advent on the Hill," the recollection will be led by Fr. Mark Lesage, CICM. Registration starts at 8 a.m. Participation fee is P280. Call Jojit at 658-5064 or Aleli at 825-3892. After the recollection, at 8 p.m., the Festival Choir and the Las Piñas Boys Choir will perform in a free concert at the Bukal ng Tipan lobby. Fr. Mimo Perez and the Earthen Vessel will also render original Christmas carols.

Buncio; 32

DEANNA R. Buncio, Director III, Office of International Relations and Protocol, Senate of the Philippines, passed away on Dec. 8 at the age of 32.

She is survived by her parents, Manuel and Aurora, and brother, Nikolai.

Her remains lie in state at their residence at #3 Saint William St., Cubao, Quezon City. Funeral mass will be held on Saturday, Dec. 13, 1 p.m. at the Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral. Cremation will follow at Funeraria Paz.

Her family and the whole Senate community request friends and relatives to join them in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

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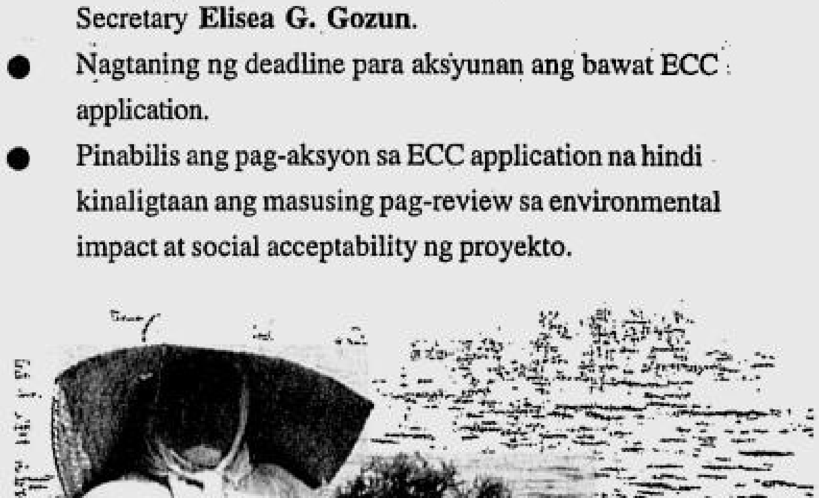
- ✓ **Makikita ang status ng ECC application sa DENR website www.denr.gov.ph**

AKSYON NI PRESIDENT GLORIA

- Pinatupad ang mas mabilis na proseso ng Environmental Compliance Certificate sa pangunguna ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary **Elisea G. Gozun.**
- Nagtaning ng deadline para aksyunan ang bawat ECC application.
- Pinabilis ang pag-aksyon sa ECC application na hindi kinaligtaan ang masusing pag-review sa environmental impact at social acceptability ng proyekto.



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– President GLORIA

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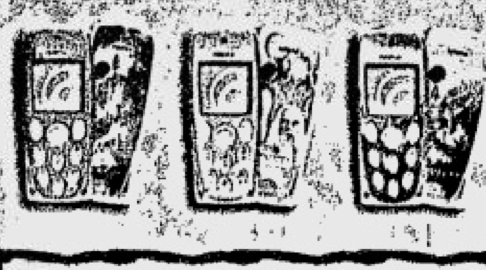

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SPORTS

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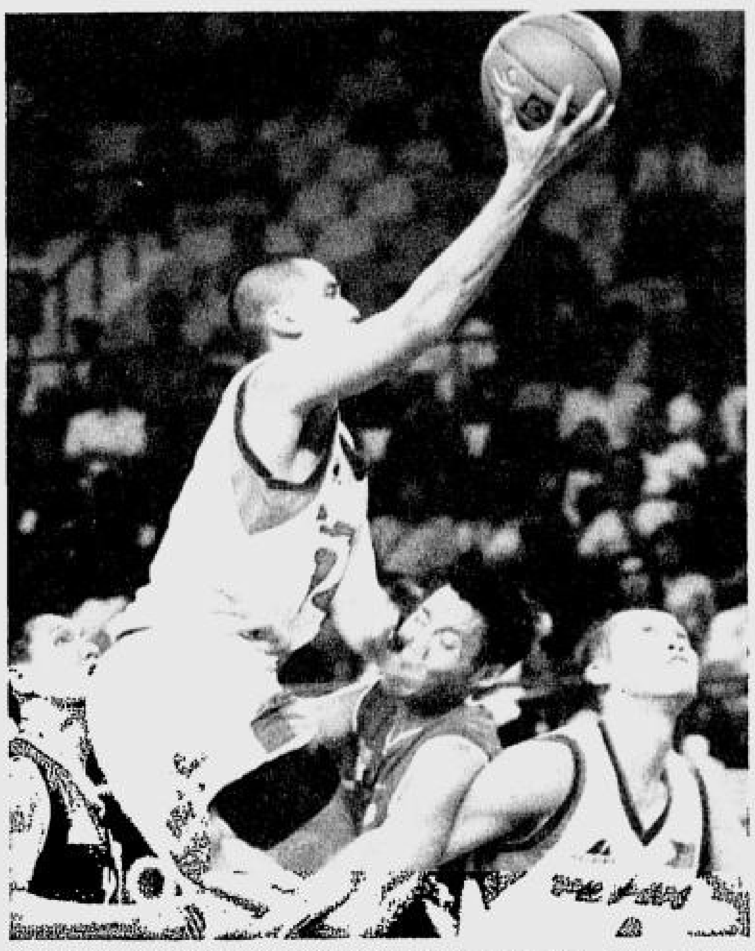

RICH Alvarez slices through the Singaporean defense. EDWIN BACASMAS

Cagers cruise to 3rd victory

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—Marc Pingris grabbed the ball in mid-air and dunked it in—two-handed—over two hapless defenders.

That monster slam by the 6-foot-6 Pingris off a missed jumper by Allán Salangsang late in the second quarter typified the way the Filipinos routed the Singaporeans, 97-56, Wednesday in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

It was the third straight lopsided victory by RP-Cebuna Lhuillier, which is defending the basketball crown the country has held since the 1991 Manila edition.

The Filipinos have beaten the Thais (93-45) and the Vietnamese (117-53).

Unforgiving in defense and frolicking in offense, the Filipinos virtually sealed the outcome early by surging to a 56-18 spread.

The 6-foot-6 De Ocampo led six Filipinos in double figures with 17 points aside from grabbing five rebounds and blocking one shot. Yap, hitting three of six triple attempts, added 15.

The Filipinos made 32 of 54 shots from the floor for 59 percent and did even better from rainbow territory, sinking six of 11 tries.

"Our defense worked again tonight. Our shooting was very good," said national coach Aric del Rosario.

The Filipinos face the lowly Indons (1-2) at 4:30 p.m. (5:30 p.m. in Manila).

Indonesia is being handled by Filipino Bong Ramos, who won the coaching job for emerging as best coach in the Indonesian league.

Earlier, the Filipinas trounced the Vietnamese, 81-50, to improve to 2-1, just behind the defending champion Malaysians, who beat them Tuesday.

Scores:

Men

RP 97—De Ocampo 17, Yap 15, David 13, Sotto 12, Calimag 12, Pingris 11, Alvarez 7, Salangsang 7, Gonzales 3, Cruz 0.

SINGAPORE 56—Koh 29, Goh 10, Wong 7, Teo 4, Chia 3, So 2, Tan 1.

Quarters: 25-9, 56-18, 80-41, 97-56.

Women

RP 81—Enriquez 15, Valencia 14, Lubiano 10, Carreo 8, Bambico 8, Grzales 7, Vega 7, Esteban 5, Narciza 3, Jaleco 0, Faustino 2, Jaleco 0.

VIETNAM 50—Quach 20, Vu 12, Nguyen TN 6, Cao 5, Le 5, Truong 2, Nguyen TH 0.

Quarters: 22-16, 46-22, 65-33, 81-50.

RP stays 5th with 5 more golds

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—Athletics came up with two victories to spark a five-gold harvest Wednesday that did little to improve the fifth place standing of the Philippines in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games.

Although picking up a second gold in swimming and a victory in fencing, the failure of the boxers to deliver more after Harry Tañamor's victory stymied the country's bid to stop the fourth-running Malaysia from pulling away.

Comebacking Danilo Fresnido emerged out of the shadow of defending javelin champion Dandy Gallenero to become the 22nd gold medalist of the contingent, and Lerma Bulauitan-Gabito bucked the biting cold at the National Stadium to clinch the women's long jump title early in the day.

Fresnido won with his opening throw of 67.11 meters while Bulauitan-Gabito prevailed in an event long dominated by Elma Muros-Posadas with her second jump of 6.21 meters as athletics, now with six victories, remained on track in its bid to surpass its nine-gold haul two years ago in Malaysia.

Miguel Molina churned to his first gold after two silvers and a bronze before the curtains dropped on swimming, taking the men's 200 freestyle gold in 1 minute 52.89 seconds.

"He's the future of RP swimming," said 1,500-meter freestyle champion Miguel Mendoza of the 18-year-old Molina, a student at the University of California-Berkeley, who had earlier placed second in the 400 and 200 individual medley and third in the 400 free.

Lenita Reyes beat teammate Veena Tessa Nuestro in fencing's foil to account for the country's fifth gold for the day.

With 26 golds, the Filipinos found themselves trailing Malaysia by four going into the last three days of competition.

The top three placings in the overall fight seems secured, with Thailand second behind unchallenged leader Vietnam and Indonesia third. The host nation has 79 golds, 26 wins ahead of Thailand. The Indons have 34.

Boxers Juanito Magliquian, Roel Laguna, Joan Tipon, Mark Melligen and

RP/ A24

Pinoy chessers set pace

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH — Filipino woodpushers are where they should be at this stage of the 22nd Southeast Asian Games standard competition—on top.

After four rounds of play, Grandmaster Eugene Torre leads the men's individual championship, WIM Beverly Mendoza paces the women's side, and the men's squad shares the lead with GM-laden Indonesia in team play.

Still in form, the 52-year-old Torre drew with countryman GM Bong Villamayor, while Mendoza beat Myanmar's Win Thandar Aye at the Van Don Hall to raise their leading totals to 3.5 points.

Three-time national women's champion Mendoza beat Vietnam's Le This Phuong Lien in the third round.

The powerhouse men's team of Torre, Villamayor, GM Joey Antonio, GM-candidate Mark Paragua and IM Ronald Dableo is tied with Indonesia for the lead.

"*Tama lang ang puwesto natin* (Our

PINOY/ A24

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MEDAL TALLY

	G	S	B	T
Vietnam	82	43	50	175
Thailand	60	62	60	182
Indonesia	34	38	52	124
Malaysia	30	29	32	91
Philippines	26	31	43	100
Singapore	22	23	27	72
Myanmar	4	27	30	61
Laos	1	2	8	11
Cambodia	1	2	4	7
Brunei	1	1	6	8
East Timor	0	0	0	0

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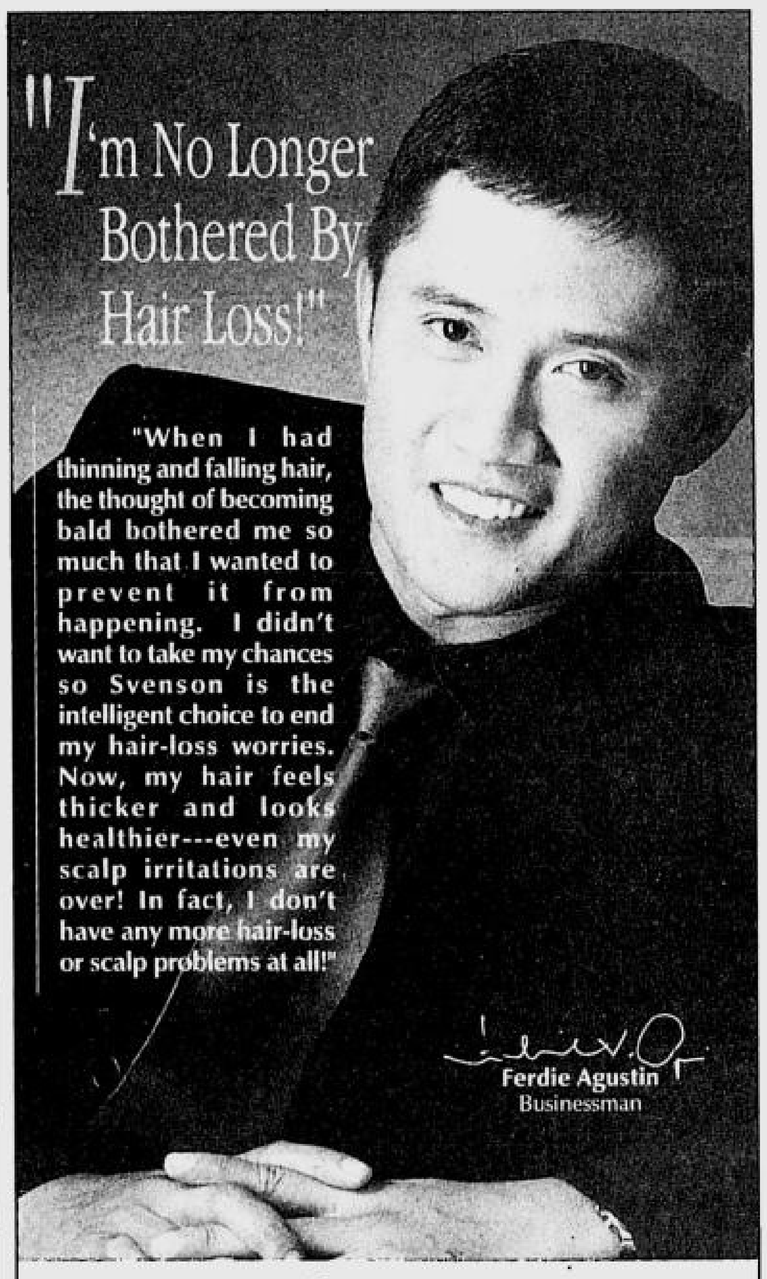

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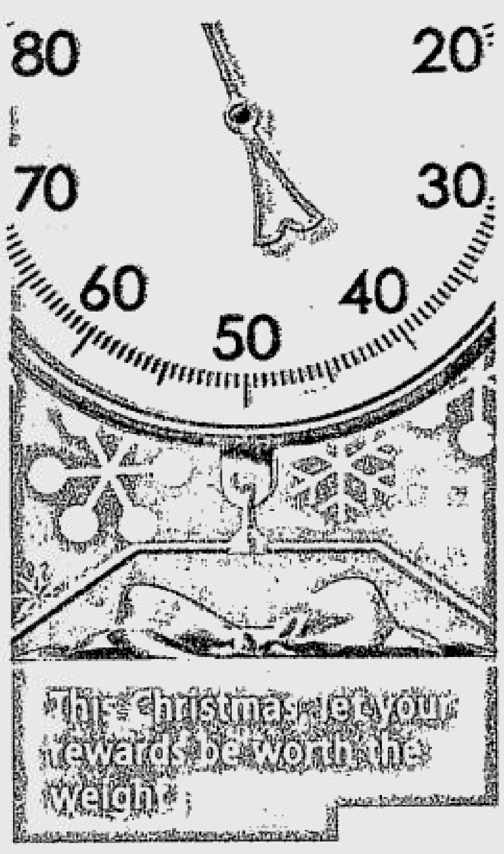

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Fresnido a pleasant athletics surprise

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—Danilo Fresnido provided the pleasant golden surprise before Lerma Bulauitan-Gabito's expected victory Wednesday as athletics sustained its role as the Philippines' top medal machine in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

Fresnido succeeded Dandy Gallenero as men's javelin champion with an opening throw of 67.11 meters before Bulauitan Gabito clinched the women's long jump title to give their sport six golds overall.

The twin victories meant the wards of athletics president Go Teng Kok are right on track in their bid to surpass their nine-gold collection two years ago in Malaysia.

The 27-year-old Fresnido, an Armyman from Bicol, became the 22nd gold medalist of the RP contingent by beating Thailand's Thirdsak Boomjansri (66.27 meters) and another Thai, Sanya Buathong (65.70).

Gallenero, who belatedly won the javelin gold when organizers disqualified the winner in Malaysia for failing a dope test, complained of the biting cold on an overcast day at the National Stadium and finished fifth in 61.33.

Bulauitan-Gabito, third in the Asian championship last September in Manila, registered her winning jump of 6.21 meters on her second attempt as she finally scored in an event long dominated by the now retired Elma Muros-Posadas.

The Filipinos look forward to at least four golds Thursday with Eduardo Buenavista, John Lozada and Ernie Candelario seeking golden doubles.

FILIPINA taekwondo jin Veronica Domingo (right) scores on a roundhouse kick against Indonesian Emerlad Margareth Dien during their semifinal match. Domingo prevailed. EDWIN BACASMAS

Why Filipinos lost the 9-ball gold

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH City—Francisco "Django" Bustamante had an explanation as to why he and Efren "Bata" Reyes dropped the 9-ball pool singles gold in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

"*Ginahasa kami ng bola* (The ball played a dirty trick on us)," said Bustamante, who, together with Reyes, were expected to cruise into the final of the event where they were ranked among the world's best.

Instead, Bustamante fell in the quarterfinal round Monday night while Reyes settled for the bronze after yielding to Indon Muhamad Junarto, 11-9, in Tuesday's semifinals at the Nguyen Du Sports Center.

"*Pag*-break *ko walang pumapasok, tapos halos ilalagay na lang ang bola* (My breaks didn't click, leading to easy shots by my opponents)," said the 40-year-old Bustamante, perhaps the game's strongest breaker, of his game against Vietnam's Nguyen Than Nam.

"*Sobrang malas talaga* (We're so unlucky)," said Bustamante, gold medalist in the Busan Asian Games and winner of the Battle of Champions in Las Vegas this year.

"*Nakakahiya, kasi ini*-expect *ng mga kababayan natin na isa sa amin ni* Efren *ang mag-uuwi ng ginto* (I feel somewhat ashamed because our countrymen are expecting either me or Efren to bring home a gold medal)," said Bustamante, puffing his cigaret continuously.

Even in the flight going here last Tuesday, many of his fellow passengers sought Bustamante's autograph and asked to pose with him. He was alone then as Reyes and other national billiards and snooker players have left earlier.

Bustamante and Reyes, who have given the country glory many times in international play through the sponsorship of Puyat Sports, left Wednesday for home.

But they need not worry. Their countrymen knew that they fought for flag and country instead of joining money-rich tournaments in the United States.

For that gesture alone, they should be commended.

PROUD TO BE PINOY!
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MENDOZA (right) with Carlo Piccio after his victory in the 1,500m. AP

From heel to swim hero

HANOI—Juan Miguel Mendoza just had to win Tuesday night.

Still winless going into the last event of swimming's penultimate program, Mendoza produced the gold medal in the 1,500-meter freestyle that turned him from heel to hero and ended the Philippines' golden shutout in the Southeast Asian Games since the 1997 edition in Jakarta.

Mendoza's first SEAG gold in the most backbreaking event in the sport came three days after he blew a gold-medal effort in the men's 4 x 400 freestyle relay, where the Filipinos were disqualified after the computer had pointed to him as the culprit for jumping too soon in the second leg.

While Mendoza said he did nothing wrong and officials refused to blame him, the gold that got away was still on everybody's lips until the 21-year-old swim scholar at the University of Georgia redeemed himself.

"It was probably an electronic glitch," Mendoza said the day after his great swim as he finally put the lid on the painful episode that will also be remembered long by his relay teammates Mark Kalaw, Miguel Molina and Carlos Piccio.

A silver medalist earlier in the 400 meters, Mendoza, who took up the sport when he was 10, said he would be going for three golds in 2005 in Manila. *Ernesto Gonzales*

RP SCHEDULE

December 11, 2003, Thursday
Vietnam Time

HANOI

Hanoi Athletics (National Sports Complex)
All Finals
9 a.m.—20km Walk, W (Melinda Manahan), Decathlon 110 Hurdles, Discus Throw, Pole Vault, Javelin Throw, 1500m (Roberto Fresnido)
3 p.m.—Hammer Throw, M (Arnell Ferrera, Jerro Perater), Long Jump, M (Henry Dagmil, Joebert Delicano), 400m Hurdles, W (Julie Forbes), 200M, W (Honey Joy Ortaliz), 200m, M (Ang Jimar), 800m, M (John Lozada), Javelin Throw W (Geralyn Amandoron), Rosie Villarito), 4x100M Relay, W (Julie Forbes, Mary Grace Melgar, Marestella Torres), 4x100m Relay, M (Henry Dagmil, Alex Gabrio, Arnold Villarube, Ang Jimar)

Canoeing (Ho Tay Boating Club)
All Finals
9 a.m.—MK1, MC1, WK1, MK2, WK2
(Note: RP sked depends on results of earlier rounds)

Fencing (Cau Giay Gymnasium)
Preliminary and Finals
8:30 a.m.—Sabre Individual, M (Walbert Mendoza, Edmon Velez)
Sabre Individual, W (Joanna Franquelli, Lenlie Reyes)
4 p.m.—Foil Team, M (Rolando Canlas Jr., Rame Endriano, Ruperto Endriano Jr., Emerson Segui)

Gymnastics (Quan Ngua Sports Palace)
Rhythmic (Ma. Angelica Basco, Maria Carla Mamerno, Maria G. Ty)

Billiards-Snooker (Nguyen Du Sports Center)
10 a.m.—1 Cushion Carom, semifinals
(Note: RP sked depends on earlier results)
Snooker Singles—James Al Solis vs Le Trong Ngoc (Vietnam).
Marlon Manalo vs Sayumin, Indonesia.
Cadre 47/1—Reynaldo Grandea vs Prasong Parak, Thailand.
7:30 p.m.—1 Cushion Carom, Snooker singles, finals (Note: RP sked depends on earlier round results)
Cadre 47/1, semifinals (Note: RP sked depends on earlier round results)

Basketball (Military Gymnasium)
2:30 p.m.—Philippines vs Indonesia (Women)
4:30 p.m.—Indonesia vs Philippines (Men)

Chess (Vand Don Indoor Stadium)
4:30 p.m.—Standard Chess, Men & Women, Round 6 (Ronald Dableo, Mark Paragua, Eugene Torre, Buenaventura Villamayor, Arianne Caoili, Kathryn Ann Cruz, Sheerie Joy Lomibao, Christine Mariano)

Wushu (Trinh Hoai Duc Gymnasium)
9 a.m.—Changshu, M (Andy Liu, Willy Wang), Taijiquan, W (May Lim).
2:30 p.m.—Gunshu, M (Arvin Ting)
7:30 p.m.—Sanshou, finals (Note: RP sked depends on results of earlier rounds)

HAISHUNG

Table Tennis (Hai Duong Gymnasium)
9 a.m.—(1st round)—Richard Gonzales vs Thailand (M), Ernesto Ebuen vs Cambodia (M)
Arlene Borja vs Cambodia (W), Sendrina Balatbat vs East Timor (W)
10 a.m. (2nd round)—Richard Gonzales vs Vietnam (M), Ernesto Ebuen vs Vietnam (M)
Arlene Borja vs Singapore (W), Sendrina Balatbat vs Malaysia (W)
3:30 p.m (3rd round)—Sendrina Balatbat vs Vietnam (W), Arlene Borja vs Vietnam (W),
Richard Gonzales vs East Timor (M)
4:30 p.m. (4th round)—Sendrina Balatbat vs Vietnam (W)

HO CHI MINH

Taekwondo (Phu Tho Indoor Stadium)
Men
8 a.m.—Donald Geisler, Lightweight (67-72kg), Alexander Briones, Welterweight (72-78kg), Dindo Simpao, Middleweight (78-84kg)
Women
Sally Solis, Welterweight (63-67kg), Margarita Bonifacio, Middleweight (67-72kg), Ann Margaret Boyle, Heavyweight (over 72kg)
7-8:30 p.m.—Finals (Note: RP sked depends on elimination round results)

Badminton (Tan Binh Indoor Stadium)
9a.m.—Singles M (Kennevic Asuncion, Ian Gil Pencenaves)
Singles W (Paula Obanana)

Sepak Takraw (Hai Ba Trung Gymnasium)
Regular Events
9a.m.—Vietnam vs Philippines (W)
11 a.m.—Malaysia vs Philippines (M)
2p.m.—Philippines vs Thailand (W)

Shooting (National Sports Training Center 1)
9 a.m.-10 a.m. Air Rifle 40 shots, W (Rachel Marie Capili, Rosell Santos, Ma. Pilar Tan), Skeet, M (Danus Alexis Hizon), 25m Center Fire Pistol 30+30, M (Nathaniel Tac Padilla)

Traditional Boat Race (West Lake)
3:16 p.m. 1,000m (M)—Heats

Volleyball (Nam Dinh-Ninh Binh)
2 p.m.—Philippines vs Vietnam (W)
2 p.m.—Philippines vs Laos (M)

Weightlifting (Soc Son Gymnasium)
4p.m.—Alvin delos Santos (105kg)

Wrestling (Ha Tay Gymnasium)
Freestyle (M&W)
9 a.m.—Violeta Agustin vs Vilakone Vongph Chank of Laos (48kg), Luis Ansag vs Munpin, SG of Indonesia (66kg), Michael Baletin vs Didi Supriadi of Indonesia (74kg), Marciano Basas vs Charat Jungun of Thailand (84kg)
Belinda Lapuento vs Nguyen Thi Giang of Vietnam (55kg)
3 p.m.—Maribel Jambola vs Manivan Inthilath of Laos (48kg), Cristina Villanueva, Paulo delos Santos vs Can Van Hung of Vietnam (55kg), Marcus Valda vs Aitcharat of Thailand (96kg), Jimmy Angana vs Muhamd Badaransyah of Indonesia (60kg), Cherry Maritz vs Try Sothavy of Cambodia (59kg).

RP bags 5 golds, stays 5th

From page A23

Florencio Ferrer all lost to their respective opponents from Thailand.

Bantamweight Kalindi Tamayo and lightweight Veronica Domingo earlier gained shots at the gold as they survived the streak of bad luck that hit their male counterparts in taekwondo.

The biggest taekwondo victim was finweight Roberto Cruz, whose bid for a SEAG record seventh straight victory ended in a semifinal loss to Thailand's Phibunkhana Bak.

Also getting the boot in the semifinals were featherweight Jefferthom Go and bantamweight Manuel Rivero Jr., who like Cruz will have to settle for the bronze medal.

Meanwhile, the national cagers moved within two wins of retaining the basketball gold by whipping Singapore, 97-56. The women dribblers stayed in contention for a silver by thumping Vietnam, 81-50.

Wilfredo Vizcayno, the first man up in fencing, settled for the silver in the individual epee while divers Jaime Asok and Nino Carag matched the same finish in the men's synchronized springboard 10-meter.

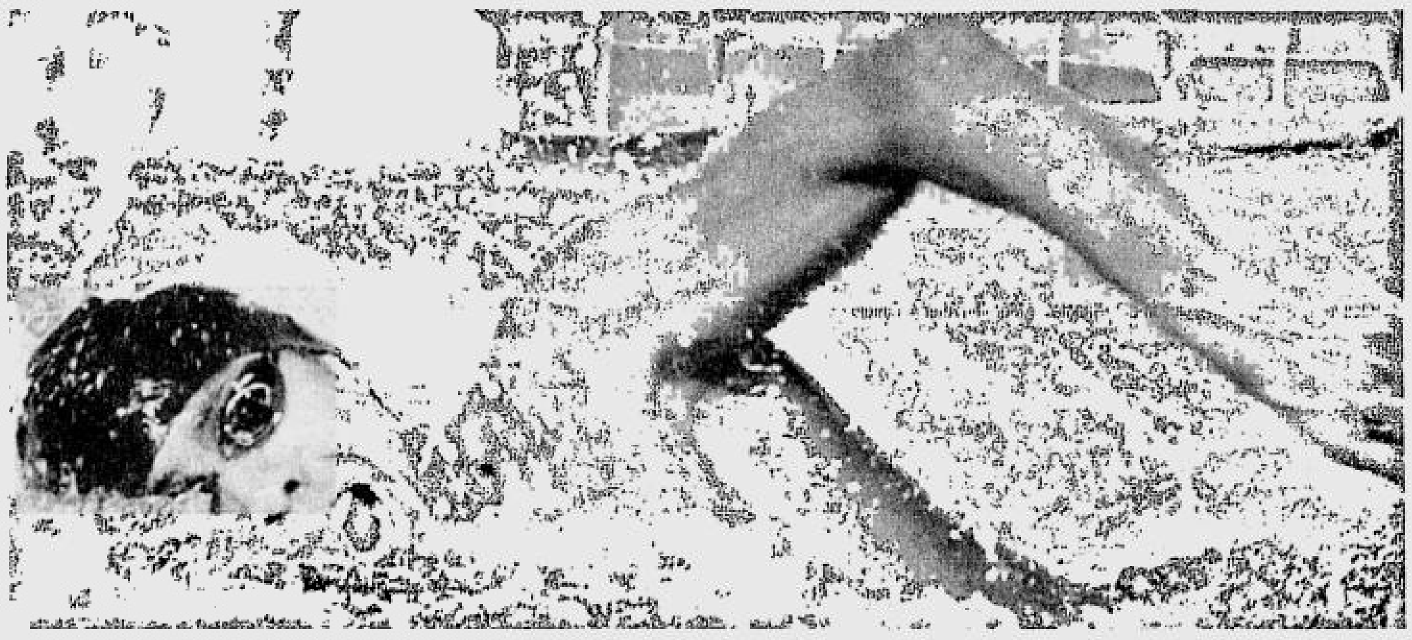
The country's top pro cyclists finished second best again as Warren Davadilla, a former Marlboro Tour champion, settled for the silver in the 160-km road race behind Malaysian Shahrul Razalli in 3:47:34.24. To make matters worse, Merculio Ramos lost the bronze after he was ranked fourth by officials for swerving into the path of Thai Youthaporn Hinthao in the mad dash to the finish.

Tour Pilipinas champion Arnel Quirimit finished fifth and Victor Espiritu, another ex-Tour winner who took the silver in the time trial Sunday, came home among the tailenders, almost a minute behind Davadilla.

Lily So contributed a bronze for wushu in taolo nandao.

An early taekwondo victim was flyweight Daleen Cordero, who lost in her first match to Booraphol Chai of Thailand.

Luica Dacanay (2:20.71) and Carlo Piccio (2:05.95) placed fourth in their respective divisions of the 200 butterfly, Mark Kalaw also was No. 4 in the men's 200 free in 1:56.13 while the men's 4x100 IM relay team wound up fifth.



MIGUEL Molina churns his way to an impressive victory in the 200m freestyle. EDWIN BACASMAS

Torre, Mendoza, men's team ahead

From page A23

position is just right). There are still five rounds to go," said lawyer Sammy Estimo, secretary general of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

The team event uses the nine-round Swiss system format where the scores of a country's top four players count towards the side's total.

Round 5 was still being played at presstime.

"*Nag-draw agad si* Eugene and Bong *para makapagpahinga sila* (Eugene and Bong agreed to a quick draw so they can rest)," said Estimo.

Villamayor, hero of the men's victory in rapid play, was at 3 points with his second straight draw. He drew with Indon Susanto Megaranto earlier.

Antonio, pride of Calapan City, Oriental Mindoro, rebounded from a third round loss to Vietnamese IM Hoang Phan Minh by beating Singapore's Jason Goh Koon-Jong and raising his total to 2.5 points.

Men's individual rapid winner Paragua, 19, was forced to another draw by Jing Zi Wong and was tied with Dableo, the Asian Zonals champion, at 2 points.

The Filipinas stood in fourth in the women's team standings, following the victory of WIM Christine Rose Mariano over Singapore's Liu Yang in the fourth round.

Kathryn Ann Cruz and WFM Sheerie Joy Lomibao drew their match, as expected.

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SEAG telecast goes full blast

HANOI—Jemah Television, in partnership with Mabuhay Satellite and local stations NBN-4 and ABC-5, has kept Filipino sports fans glued to the coverage of the 22nd SEA Games here.

With a lean team of 23 production and technical staff in Hanoi's International Broadcast Center and a skeletal force in Ho Chi Minh City, the gargantuan task of having to beam 25 sports events involving the 460-strong RP delegates is as hard as winning the elusive gold medal.

Sportscasters Recah Trinidad and Chino Trinidad handle most of the broadcast. They are assisted by technical expert Milo Cacanindin and Marie Datu-Mamawal for production.

Joy's mulligan

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

COMMODORE Julito "Joy" M Casillan (ret.) wrote to say he had recently scored a hole-in-one with a mulligan. He wanted to know if his mulligan was a hole-in-one. Read on.

"To my friend *kabayan* Al,

"I am now looking at the marker of the tee mound on No. 1 of the Baguio Country Club and it says, 'No Mulligan Today.' So, even if the word mulligan does not exist in the rule book of both the USGA and R & A of St. Andrews, the word always manages to find itself being prominently displayed in this historic golf course of Baguio City.

"What is so special about this word mulligan?

"The word mulligan has become special to me because I made a hole-in-one with a mulligan but it was not counted. This was scored at No. 10 of the Philippine Navy Golf Course (PNGC) on Nov. 10, 2003. Beside the tee mound is the sign: 'No mulligan allowed on Sundays and Holidays.' Nov. 10, 2003 was neither a Sunday nor a Holiday. My question is, can the PNGC officials officially recognize my feat as a hole-in-one?

"My friends are divided. Some say, it's a hole-in-one. Others say it's not. Still others say that a local rule not covered by either the USGA or R & A of St. Andrews is legal.

"As a rules man yourself, what can you say? I value your opinion, *kabayan*. By the way, my flight mates that day were Modesto Tolentino, Rico Pino and Mon Aguillon.

"Mulliganly yours, Joy."

Before I respond, the dictionary defines mulligan as "A shot not counted against the score, permitted in unofficial play to a player whose previous shot was a poor one."

My ruling?

Initially, I had thought you scored a hole-in-one. But upon closer scrutiny, you did not. I'm sorry Kabayan Joy but your mulligan cannot be considered a hole-in-one because a mulligan is a second shot in golf. A hole-in-one is a holed shot scored with the first stroke off the tee. As clear as day.

The PNGC rule allowing a mulligan on Sundays and Holidays is legal by all means. But it does not change the complexion of a hole-in-one. The mulligan rule merely allows you to exercise your option to hit another ball but not give you the license to break a golf rule, which is that a hole-in-one can only be scored with the first shot off the tee. Maybe Kabayan Joy, your first shot that day was six inches short of the cup and you felt that with a mulligan, you could finally find the hole—which you did?

That was still something to crow about. How many others in the world have done what you have done? Maybe you were the first? Who knows?

But again that was not a hole-in-one. Let's just call it maybe a mulligan ace. And next, treat the gang a round of beer at the clubhouse.

Any reason to drink will always be a good reason.

***

FASTBREAK. Hole-in-one scorers Richard Solang and James Nakamura won the raffled tickets to Paris and London, respectively, from Eva Air during the awarding ceremonies of the recent 54th Fil-Am Golf Invitational in Baguio City... Merk's Place at Greenbelt 3 has something special that I believe is not found anywhere in the world: All 10 brands of red wine in its wine list are priced uniformly at P800 each bottle. It kills the perception that a costlier bottle is much better than the cheap one. It makes sense, right? I have tried four of the brands and I tell you, fellas, they all taste great. Wolf Blass of South Australia (Shiraz Cabernet Sauvignon, red label), Richard Merk's favorite, is a real knockout. It can match up with Bert Bravo's Carmen Merlot of Chile at Grappa's, a pasta joint that Dolphy visits every now and then.

POCH juinio of Coca-Cola dunks unmolested in this bit of action last night. RUDY ESPERAS

Tigers a win from crown

GAME TOMORROW *(Philsports Arena)*
7 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs San Miguel Beer

By June Navarro

KWAN Johnson showed up in the pink of health last night but failed to convert the baskets San Miguel Beer needed most as Coca-Cola escaped with an 86-84 squeaker and took a 3-2 edge in the PBA Reinforced Finals at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Johnson, who returned from a groin injury, flubbed a go-ahead triple in the final 21 seconds and saw his drive at the buzzer rim out, allowing the Tigers to move to the threshold of capturing their second crown in four straight championship stints.

As Coca-Cola coach Chot Reyes and the Tigers rejoiced at the dugout, the entire San Miguel Beer coaching staff was a picture of frustration, shaking their heads in disbelief as to what had hit them.

"As I've said, this game will all boil down to which team makes the shots and the defensive stops when needed. It's a battle of attrition," said Reyes, who avoided going down 2-3 for the second time in the Tigers' last three Finals appearances.

Reyes has never won a best-of-seven title series when he's down 2-3.

Rob Wainwright and Jeffrey Cariaso stole the thunder from import Tee McClary as they spearheaded the Tigers' offensive in the payoff period that opened an 85-79 spread for the Tigers with less than two minutes remaining.

Johnson then sank two technical free throws as a result of a skirmish with Wainwright and canned a trey that put the Beermen within striking distance, 84-85.

But overconfidence swallowed Johnson down the stretch as he missed a three-pointer and a layup.

Since 1999, eight of the nine teams which took a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven Finals went on to win the championship.

In seven previous Finals appearances under coach Jong Uichico, San Miguel Beer also went on to win the crown after taking a 3-2 series lead. They lost all five title matches after squandering Game 5.

Meanwhile, 20 players led by Asi Taulava of Talk 'N Text will be treating 75 orphans and street children to a day of fun this Saturday at the Enchanted Kingdom in Sta. Rosa, Laguna as part of the PBA's Christmas outreach program.

Scores:

COCA-COLA 86—McClary 17, Wainwright 14, Cariaso 13, Hatfield 12, Morano 10, Reavis 8, Abarrientos 7, Juinio 5, Hawkins 0, Averido 0, Antonio 0.

SAN MIGUEL 84—Johnson 30, Belasco 15, Hontiveros 10, Ildefonso 9, Racela 7, Mente 6, Victoria 4, Peña 3.

Quarters: 21-17, 32-37, 63-62, 86-84.

Gold Cup race fires off Sunday

THE 31st Presidential Gold Cup, the country's most prestigious race, fires off this Sunday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

It will be the 19th time since its inaugural staging in 1973 that the Manila Jockey Club. Inc. is hosting the event.

"We are grateful for the steadfast support of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office to this annual classic which serves as the marquee event of the local horse racing industry," said MJCI director Martin R. Cepeda.

Aside from the PCSO which put up P1.5 million as prize money, industrialist-horseman Don Antonio Floirendo Sr. also backed the event by donating an additional P500,000, assuring this year's PGC champion of a guaranteed prize of P2 million.

Defending champion Free Wind is heading the 11-horse cast battling for first place.

Others participating are West Bound, Success Story, Silver Story, Lyonnais, Material Maker, High Octane, Perfect Storm, Diktador, Mica's Magic and Red Star Rising.

No less than President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the event's honoree, has been invited to award the prestigious Presidential Gold Cup to the owner of the winning entry.

In addition to the day's main event, MJCI is also holding the P500,000 Chair Jaime Dilag and Commissioners' Cup in recognition of their outstanding stewardship of the Philracom and support to the SLLP.

The Philracom will also sponsor the P500,000 Hopeful Stakes.

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Race 3--1. Silver Lining 2. Wynona Raider 3. Coolmore 4. Aminin 5. Valentine Dancer

Race 4--1. Silver Flyer 2. Queen of D Jungle 3. Alert One 4. Hong Kong Treasures

Race 5--1. Mr. Positive 2. Silver Music 3. Free Rein 4. Moore Magic 5. Game Over

Race 6--1. Candon's Pride 2. Music Quest 3. He's So Lucky

Race 7--1. Cartada Nueve 2. Vice Free 3. My Sheikh 4. Vhingget 5. Time Deposit

Race 8--1. Assunta de Rio 2. Sunny Sky 3. Morning After 4. Candid

Race 9--1. Worth Ur While 2. Golden Prince 3. Arrogante 4. Mercurian/Expediter 5. Overture 6. Tenacity

SPORTSWATCH

UCM cagers keep unblemished slate

UCM Cooling Coils leaned on the clutch shooting of Rocky Tan and Johannes Go to turn back Anson's, 82-76, and stay unbeaten after seven games in the GCHS Inter-Batch basketball tournament at the GCHS gym. The Cooling Coils demolished Genesis, 89-64, at the start of the carryover quarterfinals last Saturday. Konka (7-0) kept pace with UCM by beating Fulcon, 70-56, and Karat, 56-44. YKL Film (6-1) downed Karat, 81-53, and Fulcon, 92-56. Congo Grille (5-2) also stayed on track by whipping Genesis, 74-64. Anson's beat Congo Grille in the quarterfinals, 70-64.

Yule exec chess pushes off Saturday

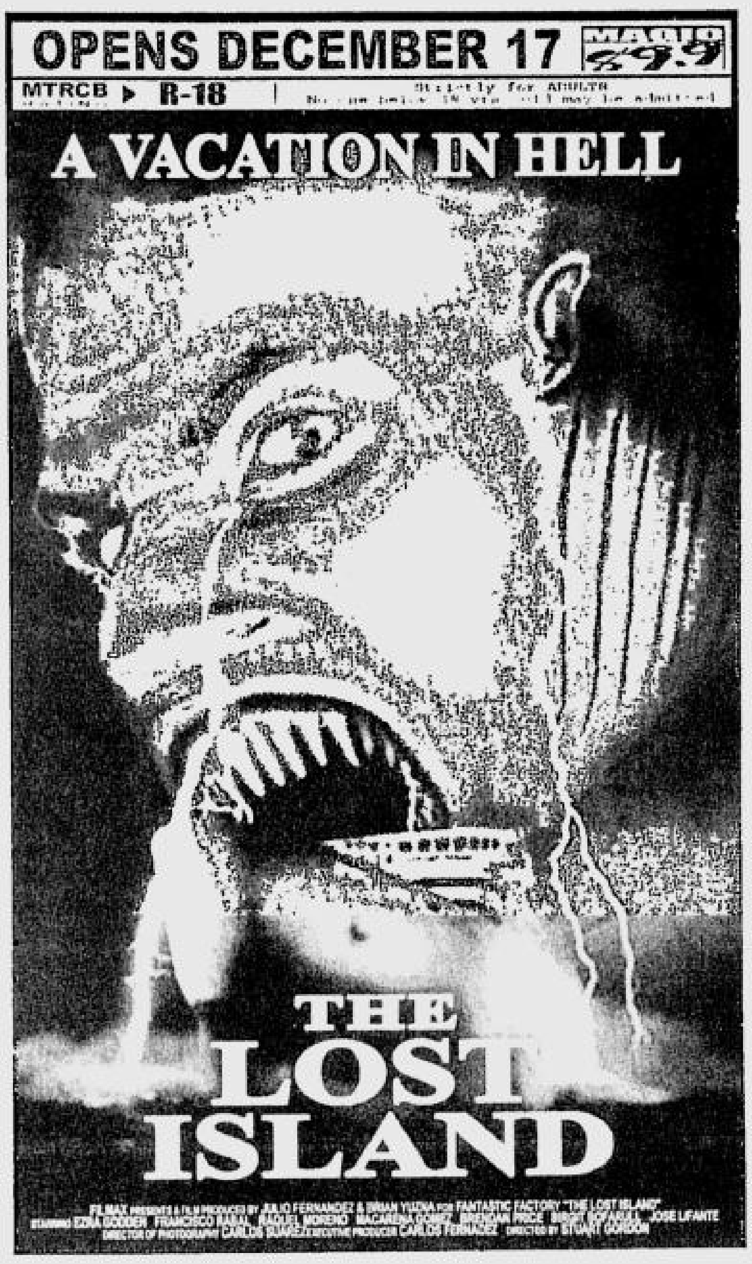
SIXTY players are vying in the Christmas Executive Chess Kings (Check) tournament which gets underway at 1 p.m. this Saturday at the CNK Donuts, 118 Easton Place Bldg., VA, Rufino Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City. The tournament, organized by the Active Chess Center of Asia (Acca) and sponsored by Belgosa Media Systems Inc., is open to business executives and licensed professionals. For inquiries, call 892-8759 or 892-0279.

KGB Christmas tourney tees off today

THE CHRISTMAS tournament of the Kapisanán ng mga Golfers sa Brodkast (KGB) will be held at the Philippine Navy golf course in Fort Bonifacio today. Highlight of the 18-hole tourney is the Battle of Champions which will pit all the past year's monthly champions to determine who will be the KGB Golfer of the Year. Competing in the elite group are Rino Basilio, Martin Limengco, Angelique Lazo, Bobby Rebullida, Ducky Paredes, Omeng Candazo, Noel Plana, Ting Antonio, Dick Ildefonso, Jun Collantes, Dick Villalon and Efren Estrada. Supporting KGB's Christmas affair are ABS/CBN, Uratex, First Gentleman Foundation, Gilbey's Gin and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office.

75 vying in Roligon's 'Apordabol' derby

TOP cockfighting action resumes today with the third round of Roligon Mega Cockpit's "Apordabol Na, Incredibol Pa 5-Cock Derby" beginning at 5 p.m. The third batch of participants (79 entries) will vie in today's elimination round. A total of 263 entries have registered for this event being hosted by top promoter Rolly Ligon. All qualifiers will advance to the championship round this Saturday. At stake is P2.25 million and a Nissan Serena for the fastest kill champion. Also slated at RMC is the BM 4-cock derby on Dec. 16, hosted by Bonjing Catajan and Monching Adriano and offering a cash prize of P300,000. The entry fee is P10,000. Slated on Dec. 18 is the Harvest Time 4-Cock Derby with Harvest Time and Flower Group as promoters. The "Cash Premyo 2-Cock Ulutan," with a guaranteed pot of P250,000, sizzles on Dec. 19. For inquiries, call 833-2275 and 833-1638.



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NISSAN U.N. AVENUE Tel. Nos. 400-1020, 400-2177, 400-1522, 526-0064 loc. 126
NISSAN ALABANG Tel. Nos. 873-2845, 873-2771, 8732770, 873-2880
CORE AUTOMOTIVE RESOURCES (CAR), Inc. Tel. Nos. 818-9464, 892-6242, 893-9221, 810-0151 to 55 local 316

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NISSAN SOUTHWOODS Tel. Nos. (046) 430-1681 to 84, 430-1604, (02) 845-1698
NISSAN NAGA Tel. Nos. (054) 472-3577 to 79
NISSAN PAMPANGA Tel. Nos. (045) 961-5461 to 62, 961-5481, 860-2184 to 65
ROYCE MOTOR CENTER Tel. Nos. (044) 463-7210 to 12, 463-3350
SANTIAGO CITY Tel. No. (078) 682-0707
BULACAN Tel. No. (044) 673-0225
PAMPANGA Tel. Nos. (045) 961-7773 to 74
WORLD CARS Tel. Nos. (044) 766-0918, 766-2425, 766-2488
CABANATUAN Tel. Nos. (044) 463-0080, 463-7279
ISABELA Tel. No. (078) 682-8850
XENTREX AUTOMOTIVE Tel. Nos. (075) 522-0656, 522-0525

VISAYAS
NISSAN BACOLOD Tel. Nos. (034) 435-1102, 434-6051 to 52
NISSAN CEBU DIST. Tel. Nos. (032) 346-0350, (032) 346-8422 to 25, (032) 345-1124
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NISSAN CAGAYAN DE ORO Tel. Nos. (08822) 728-686, 725-882, (088) 856-3002
BUTUAN Tel. Nos. (085) 815-3184, 342-7210
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GENERAL SANTOS Tel. No. (083) 552-3228

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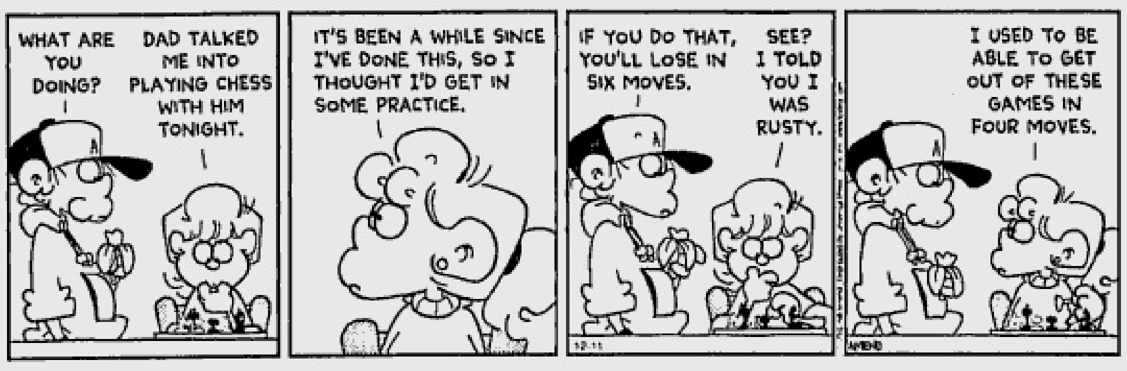
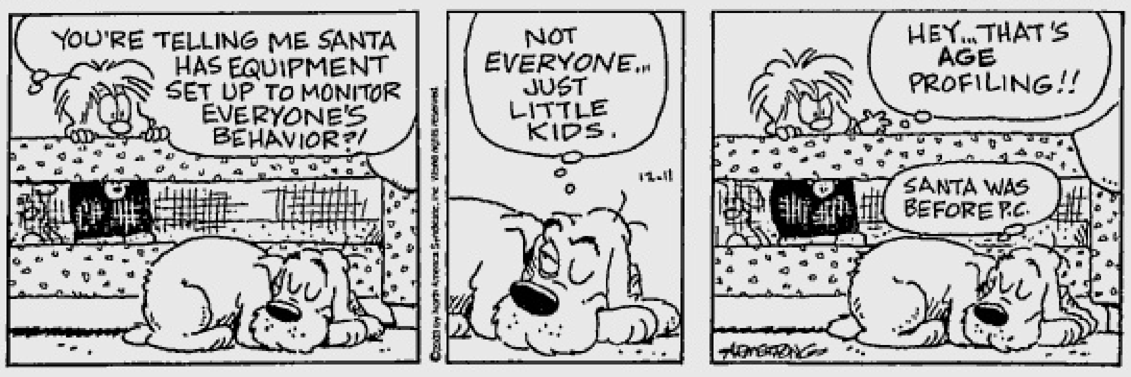
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
DAD TALKED ME INTO PLAYING CHESS WITH HIM TONIGHT.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I'VE DONE THIS, SO I THOUGHT I'D GET IN SOME PRACTICE.
IF YOU DO THAT, YOU'LL LOSE IN SIX MOVES.
SEE? I TOLD YOU I WAS RUSTY.
I USED TO BE ABLE TO GET OUT OF THESE GAMES IN FOUR MOVES.
AMEND

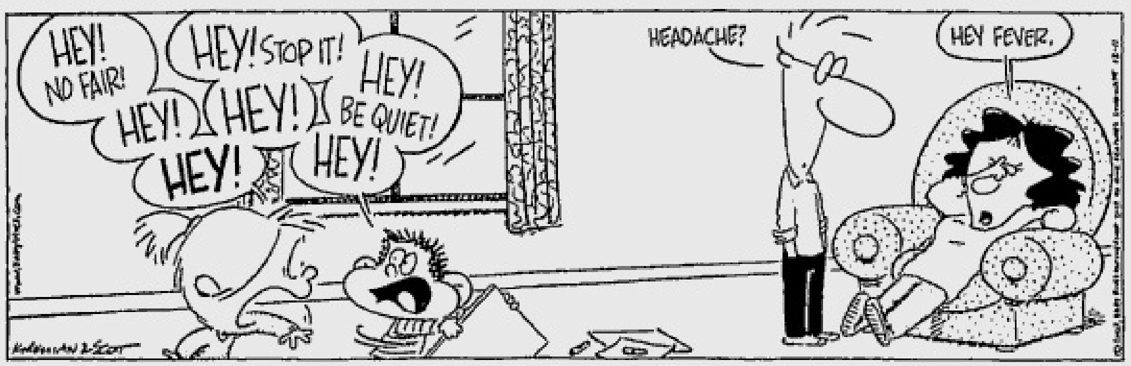
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


YOU'RE TELLING ME SANTA HAS EQUIPMENT SET UP TO MONITOR EVERYONE'S BEHAVIOR?!
NOT EVERYONE... JUST LITTLE KIDS.
12-11
HEY... THAT'S AGE PROFILING!!
SANTA WAS BEFORE P.C.
ARMSTRONG

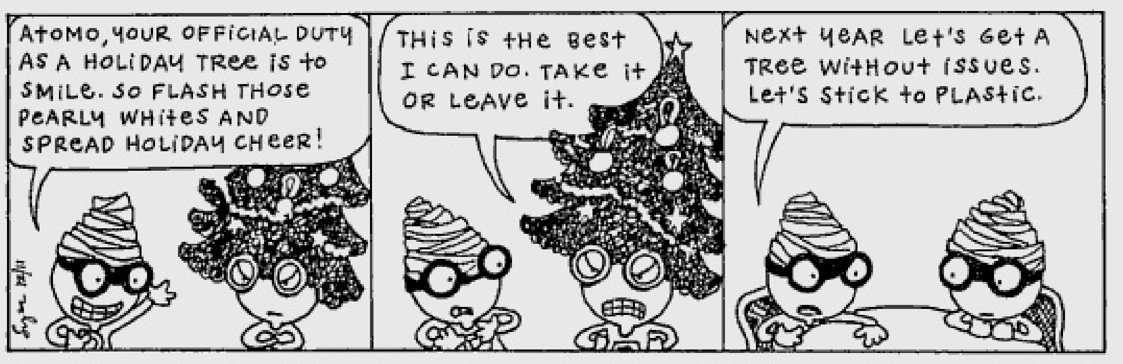
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HEY! NO FAIR!
HEY! STOP IT!
HEY! BE QUIET!
HEY!
HEY!
HEY!
HEY!
HEADACHE?
HEY FEVER.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


ATOMO, YOUR OFFICIAL DUTY AS A HOLIDAY TREE IS TO SMILE. SO FLASH THOSE PEARLY WHITES AND SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER!
THIS IS THE BEST I CAN DO. TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.
NEXT YEAR LET'S GET A TREE WITHOUT ISSUES. LET'S STICK TO PLASTIC.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are not casual about anything. You are serious and purposeful. You often have enormous influence over the lives of others. It's important to you to have the support of people—psychologically, emotionally and practically. You have strong beliefs. The year ahead focuses on your closest relationships and partnerships.
Birthdate of: Alexander Solzhenitsyn, writer; Brenda Lee, singer; Teri Garr, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today is grand. Important people give you an approving nod at work. This is just one step in the journey that makes your job improve so much this year. (Yay!)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a fabulous day for romance, parties, entertaining diversions, the arts, the education of children and anything related to publishing and the media. You can't go wrong!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might receive a gift, inheritance, favor or advantage that blesses your home or your family today. This is a wonderful day for real estate deals.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your conversations with everyone are smooth, diplomatic and utterly charming today. You're on top of your game, you're in the pink, you're on a roll, (you get the picture).

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Excellent day at work! You can do all kinds of clever things that ultimately boost your earnings. People are ready to practically throw money at you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): What a wonderful day for a party! Artists are particularly creative as well. It's a good day to begin a vacation. Whatever you do will be rewarding and fun.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is an extremely good day for real estate deals and family business. It's also a wonderful time to buy beautiful things to enhance your home. Bonus!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're in fine spirits! Be open to all social occasions, amusements and entertainments. You could meet someone who will be of great service to you later.

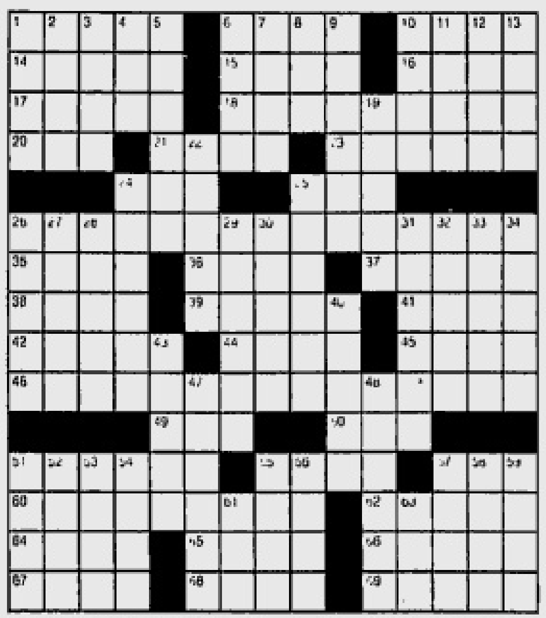
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be alert for ways to promote your good name, especially with VIPs and bosses. Everybody loves you today, and you look terrific on the job.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is the perfect day to set off on an exciting journey of travel to another country or a distant place or on a journey of education to gain new worldly experience. "Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." (Mark Twain)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Behind-the-scenes information or deals can benefit you in some way today. Don't hesitate to negotiate with the government and large institutions.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Friends and groups benefit you big-time today. Whatever you initiate will probably bring you a profit or advantage in the future.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
12/11/03

ACROSS
1 Fictional ring bearer
6 Voting group
10 Driver Earnhardt
14 Ran at an easy pace
15 Olin or Horne
16 Comic Sandler
17 Make revisions
18 Start of an order
20 Prohibition
21 Foresails
23 Actress Plummer
24 Won follower?
25 Press Secretary Fleischer
26 Part 2 of order
35 Celebes buffalo
36 Jai __
37 Wading bird
38 Litter weakling
39 Desires
41 Racer Luyendyk
42 Halloween option
44 Speckled steed
45 Vault
46 Part 3 of order
49 Ocasek of The Cars
50 Large mythical bird
51 "The Piano" co-star Harvey
55 Aid a con man
57 Posed
60 End of order
62 Video game pioneer
64 Country singer McCann
65 __ to that!
66 Brightest star in Orion
67 Fulda tributary
68 Back talk
69 Leavening ingredient

DOWN
1 Loose fat
2 Capital of Italia
3 Unrestricted
4 Lair
5 Handyman's assignment
6 Shapeless form
7 Camera eye
8 Half and half?
9 Former Chevy model
10 Incongruous art movement
11 Tennis situation
12 Glorify
13 Austen novel
19 Zatopek and Jannings
22 Acquired family member
24 Old-time roofing material
25 Japanese dogs
26 Oder tributary
27 Entomb
28 Gin and __
29 King of the Visigoths
30 Tippy craft
31 Emphatic typeface
32 Small songbird
33 Cuban boy in 2000 news
34 Dance moves
40 Saw wood in bed
43 Asian peninsula
47 Country estates
48 __ public
51 Leafy veggie
52 Writer Bagnold
53 Inactive
54 Romanov title
55 Iowa State city
56 Containers
57 Heroic narrative
58 Militant deity
59 Incline
61 Doctors' org.
63 Deadlock

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

M	E	S	S		G	A	M	E	R		P	A	S	T
E	R	I	E		A	R	E	T	E		A	L	E	E
G	I	L	A		M	A	N	E	D		D	E	L	L
	C	O	L	U	M	B	U	S	C	I	R	C	L	E
				H	A	S			R	O	E			
I	C	A	R	U	S		S	P	O	N	S	O	R	S
N	A	D	E	R		A	L	A	S			S	A	L
T	R	A	F	A	L	G	A	R	S	Q	U	A	R	E
R	O	G			I	R	M	A		U	R	G	E	D
A	M	E	R	I	C	A	S		L	I	N	E	R	S
			A	C	E			T	E	N				
G	O	L	D	E	N	T	R	I	A	N	G	L	E	
R	A	I	N		S	H	O	E	S		R	O	V	E
A	H	M	E		E	U	B	I	E		O	V	E	R
S	U	E	R		E	D	E	N	S		W	E	R	E

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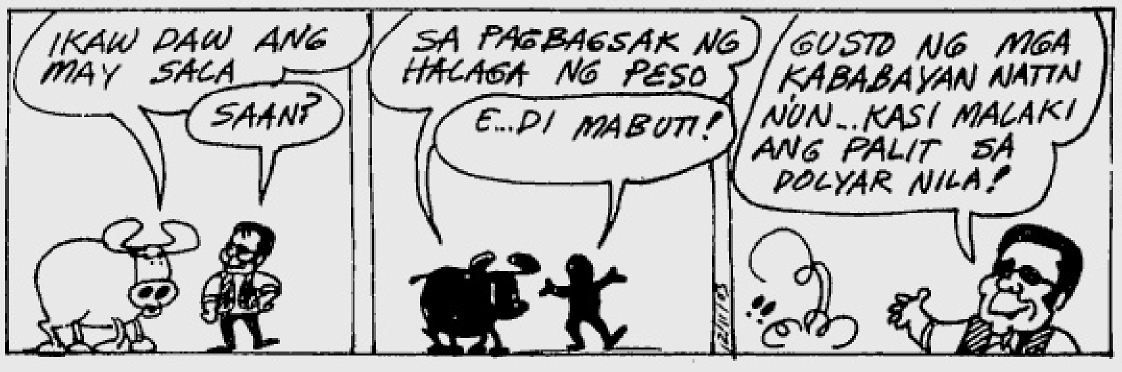
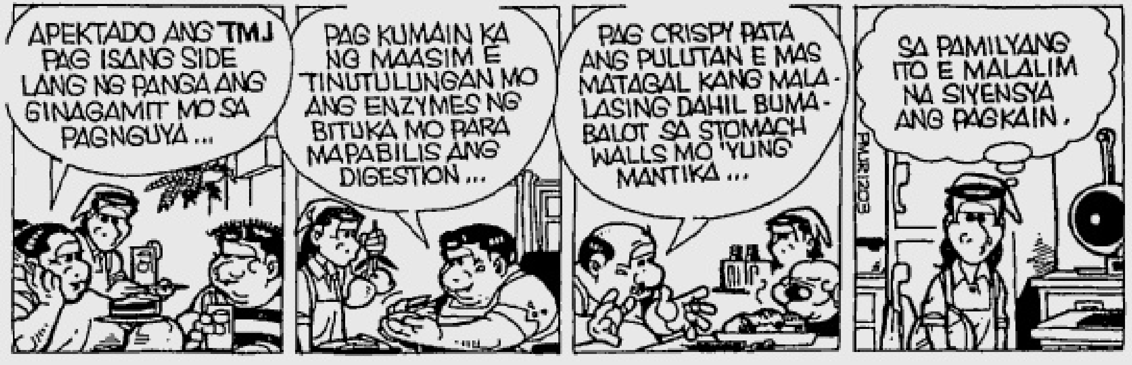
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


IKAW DAW ANG MAY SACA
SAAN?
SA PAGBAGSAK NG HALAGA NG PESO
E...DI MABUTI!
GUSTO NG MGA KABABAYAN NATIN NUN...KASI MALAKI ANG PALIT SA DOLYAR NILA!

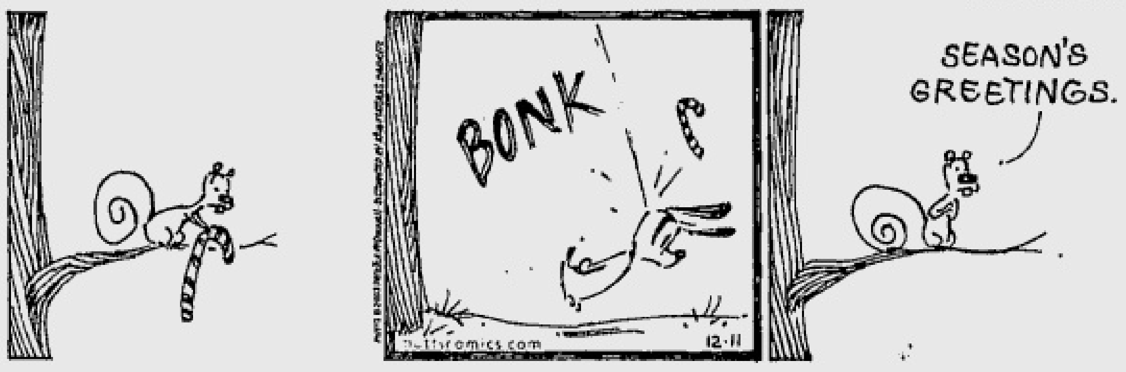
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


APEKTADO ANG TMJ PAG ISANG SIDE LANG NG PANGA ANG GINAGAMIT MO SA PAGNGUYA...
PAG KUMAIN KA NG MAASIM E TINUTULUNGAN MO ANG ENZYMES NG BITUKA MO PARA MAPABILIS ANG DIGESTION...
PAG CRISPY PATA ANG PULUTAN E MAS MATAGAL KANG MALALASING DAHIL BUMABALOT SA STOMACH WALLS MO 'YUNG MANTIKA...
SA PAMILYANG ITO E MALALIM NA SIYENSYA ANG PAGKAIN.

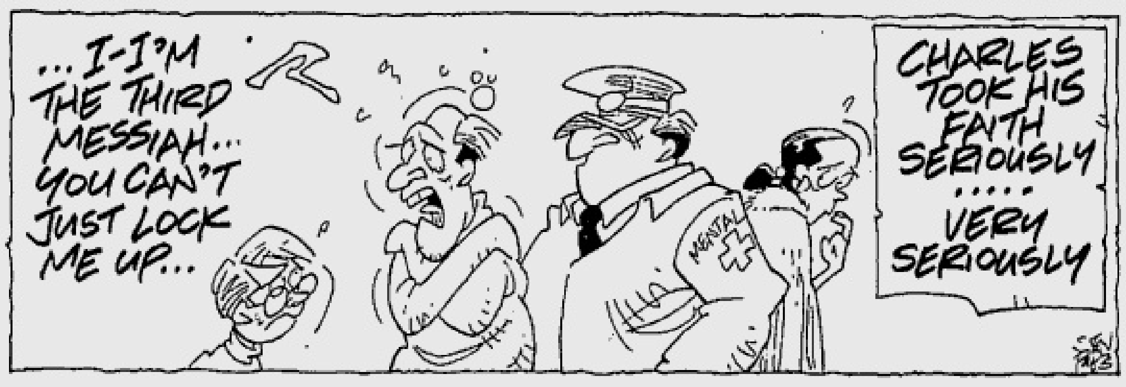
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BONK
muttscomics.com
12-11
SEASON'S GREETINGS.

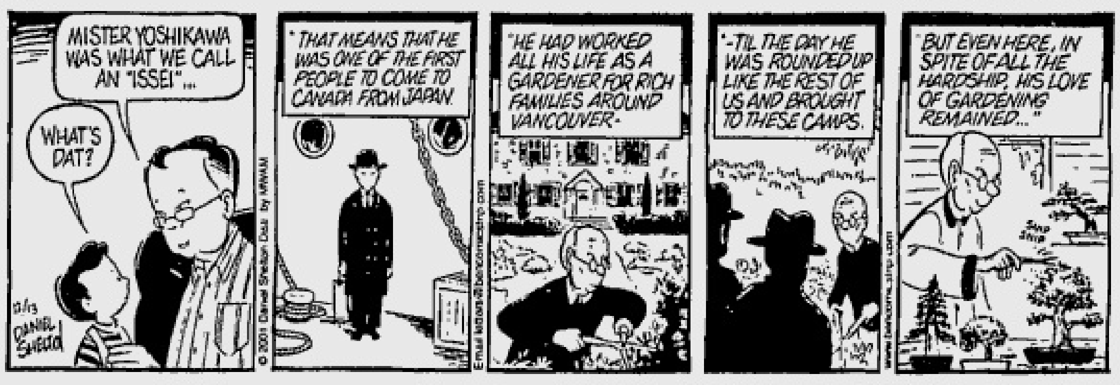
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


...I-I'M THE THIRD MESSIAH... YOU CAN'T JUST LOCK ME UP...
MENTAL
CHARLES TOOK HIS FAITH SERIOUSLY ..... VERY SERIOUSLY

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


MISTER YOSHIKAWA WAS WHAT WE CALL AN "ISSEI"...
WHAT'S DAT?
"THAT MEANS THAT HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE TO COME TO CANADA FROM JAPAN.
"HE HAD WORKED ALL HIS LIFE AS A GARDENER FOR RICH FAMILIES AROUND VANCOUVER-
"-TIL THE DAY HE WAS ROUNDED UP LIKE THE REST OF US AND BROUGHT TO THESE CAMPS.
"BUT EVEN HERE, IN SPITE OF ALL THE HARDSHIP, HIS LOVE OF GARDENING REMAINED..."

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

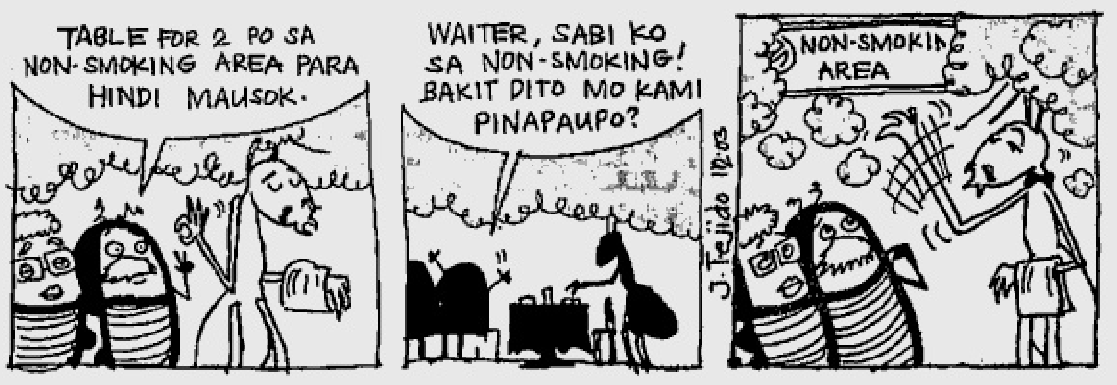
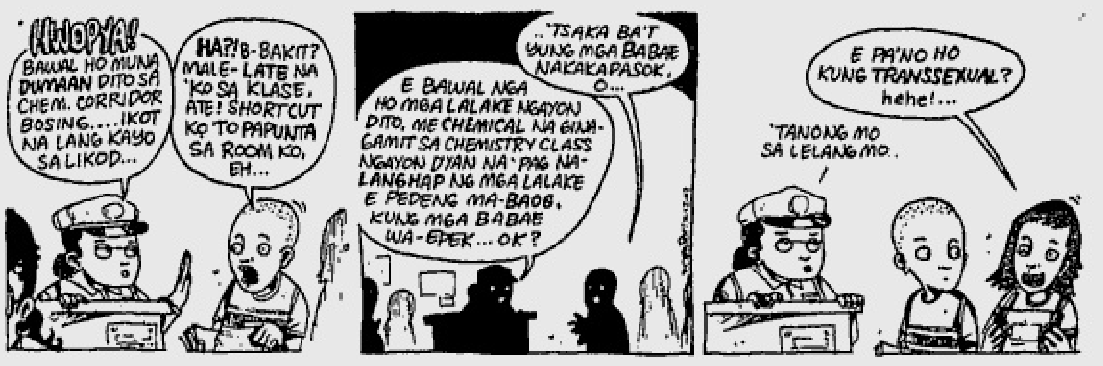


TABLE FOR 2 PO SA NON-SMOKING AREA PARA HINDI MAUSOK.
WAITER, SABI KO SA NON-SMOKING! BAKIT DITO MO KAMI PINAPAUPO?
J. Tejido 12-03
NON-SMOKING AREA

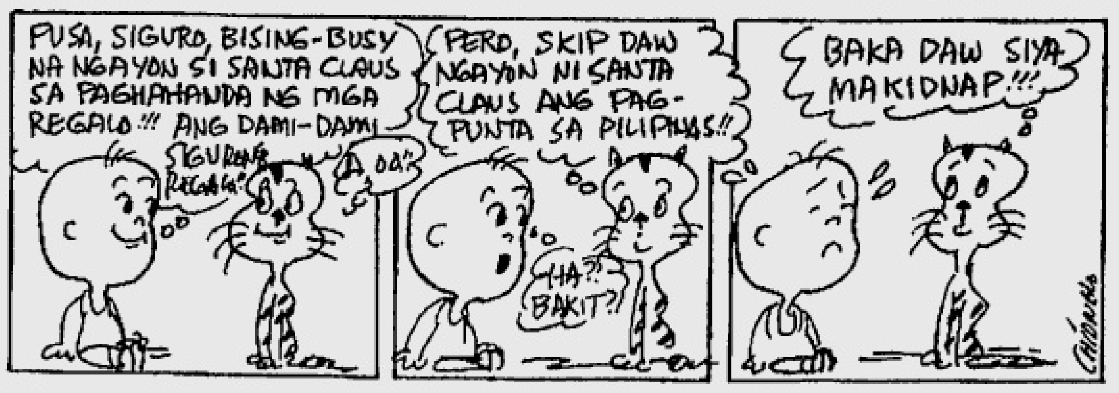
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOPYA! BAWAL HO MUNA DUMAAN DITO SA CHEM. CORRIDOR BOSING.... IKOT NA LANG KAYO SA LIKOD...
HA?! B-BAKIT? MALE-LATE NA 'KO SA KLASE, ATE! SHORTCUT KO TO PAPUNTA SA ROOM KO, EH...
E BAWAL NGA HO MGA LALAKE NGAYON DITO, ME CHEMICAL NA GINAGAMIT SA CHEMISTRY CLASS NGAYON D'YAN NA PAG NALANGHAP NG MGA LALAKE E PEDENG MA-BAOG. KUNG MGA BABAE WA-EPEK... OK?
..TSAKA BA'T YUNG MGA BABAE NAKAKAPASOK, O...
E PA'NO HO KUNG TRANSSEXUAL? hehe!...
'TANONG MO SA LELANG MO.

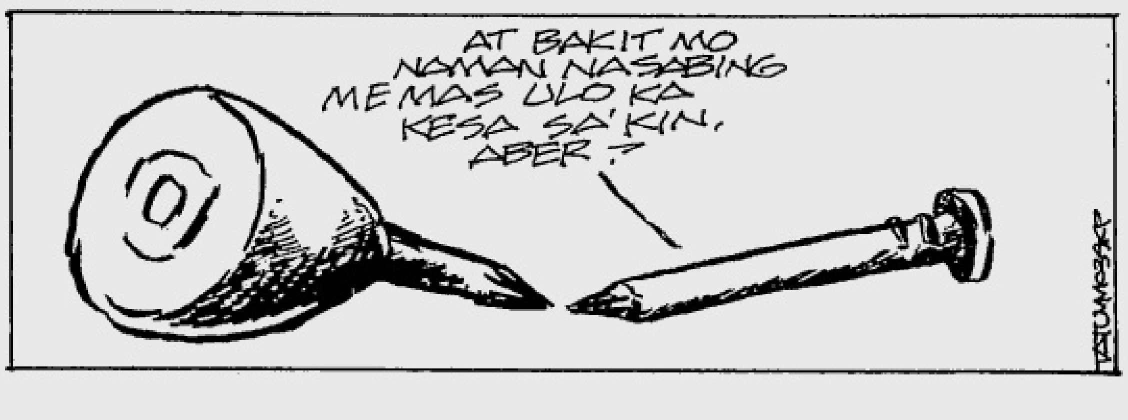
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, SIGURO, BISING-BUSY NA NGAYON SI SANTA CLAUS SA PAGHAHANDA NG MGA REGALO!!! ANG DAMI-DAMI SIGURONG REGALO!
A OA!
PERO, SKIP DAW NGAYON NI SANTA CLAUS ANG PAGPUNTA SA PILIPINAS!!
HA?! BAKIT?!
BAKA DAW SIYA MAKIDNAP!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


AT BAKIT MO NAMAN NASABING MEMAS ULO KA KESA SA'KIN, ABER?
TATUM&PAPU

Tours, Leisure & Chow

cmadamba@inquirer.com.ph
897-8808 local 209 and 238

Alden Joshua Cedo, Graphics Design
Aries Espinosa, Editor

Dusit Hotel's Christmas bundles of joy

DUSIT Hotel Nikko has wrapped up very special Christmas delights and activities for patrons this December.

An exotic Christmas with authentic Thai meals await at Benjarong Royal Thai Restaurant on Dec. 24 and 25 with set menu choices at P850++ and P950++ on Dec. 31, complemented by a glass of sparkling wine. Benkay Japanese Restaurant—food connoisseurs' top favorite Japanese restaurant for almost 30 years—offers Nabe Kaiseki (Japanese Hot Pot) this December for only P750++ to P950++ per order. For good health and long life on New Year's Eve, try Toshi Koshi Soba (Noodles on Parade) from P280++ to P340++. From Jan. 1 to 3, 2004, enjoy the traditional and sumptuous Osechi Ryori for lunch and dinner at P1,400++ per set. For a Vietnamese Yuletide Feast, come to Thien Duong Vietnamese restaurant on Dec. 24 and 25, 31 and Jan. 1, 2004 and savor delectable set menus ranging from P500++ to P700++ with a complimentary glass of sparkling wine.

Gather for a fantastic celebration at The Cafe with its Christmas and New Year Dinner Buffet Specials featuring all-time Filipino and foreign holiday fare favorites on Dec. 24 and 25, 31, and Jan. 1, 2004 for only P750++, complete with a complimentary glass of sparkling wine. For sweet-toothed gift-giving, choose from the Deli Shop's tempting array of mouth-watering goodies. 50 percent off on specialty cakes and pastries from 7 to 9 p.m.

Filipino Christmases will never be complete without Puto Bumbong and Bibingka. The native delicacies make for perfect breakfast or tea time fare. Available from Nov. 27 to Jan. 4, 2004 at the Lobby Lounge for only P170++ (Puto Bumbong) and P200++ (Bibingka) with a choice of coffee, tea or *salabat*.

Welcome 2004 with a party at Fiesta San Miguel, where great bands and great food are for a cover charge of only P350++ consumable. Fiesta San Miguel has also prepared Fiesta Specials for dinner on Dec. 24 to 25, 31 and Jan. 1, 2004. Family style set menus pegged at P3,000++ for four and P5,500++ for eight persons are available. New Year's Eve diners of the Café, Benjarong, Thien Duong and Benkay get free access and noise makers for the fun-filled Fiesta San Miguel New Year's Eve Countdown.

For guests who would opt to attend more solemn and private mass celebrations, Dusit Hotel Nikko will also be holding the traditional Misa de Gallo at 5:30 a.m. at the lobby from Dec. 16 to 24. The hotel's Grand Ballroom will have the Christmas eve mass on Dec. 24, 8 p.m.; Christmas day mass on Dec. 25, 10 a.m.; New Year's Eve mass on Dec. 31, 8 p.m.; and New Year's Day mass on Jan. 1, 10 a.m.

It is the Dusit Hotel Nikko tradition to have children as the center of Christmas activities. This year, the lobby is again filled with their voices. There will be at least 1,500 children in choirs from 29 schools from Nov. 28 to Dec. 21, at 6 p.m. Then on Dec. 22 & 23, children from two orphanages will be welcomed.

Visit Dusit Hotel Nikko these holidays. For queries, call 867-3333.

It is the Dusit Hotel Nikko tradition to have children as the center of Christmas activities.

Where to Stop Where to GO

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

New World Renaissance Hotel
Esperanza St. cor. makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 811-6888/Fax. 811-6777
www.marriott.com

The Peninsula Manila Hotel
Cor. Ayala Ave. & Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 810-3456/ Fax 815-4825

Makati Shangri-La Hotel
Ayala Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 813-8888/ Fax 813-5499
www.shangri-la.com

Mandarin Oriental Manila
Paseo de Roxas cor. Makati Ave. Makati City
Tel. 750-8888
www.mandarinoriental.com

Dusit Hotel Nikko
Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City Phil.
Tel. 867-3333 Email: dusitmnl@dusit.com
http://manila.dusit.com

The Bellevue Manila
North Bridgeway, Northgate
Alabang, Muntinlupa
Tel. (632) 771-8181/ fax (632) 771-8282
www.thebellevue.com.ph

Barcelo Hotels and Resorts
27th Floor, Trident Towers, 312 Sen. Gil
Puyat Ave., Makati City 1200
Tel. (02) 889-1000/ fax (02) 889-2765
www.barcelo-asia.com

Waterfront Hotel Lahug
1 Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City
Tel. (6332) 232-6888/Fax (6332)232-6880
www.waterfronthotels.net

Mactan Island Resort
Punta Engano Road, Lapu Lapu Cebu
Tel. (632) 231-0288/Fax (632) 231-1688
www.shangri-la.com

Waterfront Hotel Mactan
1 Airport Road, Lapu Lapu City, 6015
Tel. (6332) 340-4888/fax (6332) 340-5693
www.waterfronthotels.net

Intercontinental Manila
1 Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Tel 815-9711
www.intercontinental.com

Royal Mandaya Hotel
J. Palma Gil St. Davao City
Tel. (082) 225-8888/fax (082) 225-1888

ASTORIA PLAZA
15 J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Business District,
Pasig City 1600
Tel 687-1111 Fax 910-0370
Email: sales@astoriaplaza.com

Camp John Hay Manor
Loakan Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 446-0231 to 50

City Garden Hotel-Makati
Makati Ave., cor. Kalayaan St., Makati City
Tel. (02) 899-1111Fax. (02) 899-1415
Email: makati:citygardenhotels.com

City Travel Hotel
15 Kisad Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 445-0456 / Fax (074) 445-0457

The Marco Polo
CM Recto St. Davao City 8000
Tel. (082) 221-0888/fax (082) 225-0111
www.marcopolohotels.com

Cooyeesan Hotel Plaza
Naguilian cor. Asin Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074) 447-8888 to 93/ (074) 447-8895 to 98
Fax. (074) 447-0494

Hotel Veniz
No. 1 Abanao St. Baguio City
Tel. (074) 446-0700/fax (074) 446-0704

Golden Pine Hotel and Restaurant
Intersection of Carino St. and Legarda
Road, Baguio City
Tel. (074)444-9965 to 72/740-8975/
Fax. (074) 446-0704

Hotel Supreme
113 Magsaysay Ave., Baguio City
Tel. (074) 443-2011 to 18 / Fax. (074) 442-2855

Skyrise Hotel
18 Dominican Road, Baguio City
Tel (074) 445-6834 to 36 /fax (074) 443-3897

Taal Vista Hotel
Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City
Tel. (046) 413-1000/Fax. (046) 413-1225

For Feedback and inquiries, call
899-4426 or 897-8808 loc 209

The Bellevue Hotel joins international golfing event

THE BELLEVUE Hotel, a world-class hotel built in the southern Metro Manila area, joins Philippine Rotary Clubs in hosting the prestigious 2007 International Golfing Fellowship Tournament in the country. The major international event will be held for the first time in 44 years in an Asean country and will gather up to 400 Rotarian participants and their families from around the world.

The Bellevue Hotel was chosen by the Rotary Golfing Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines to be the official residence of the international delegates. Because of its reputation of being an ideal retreat for avid golfers and their families and its proximity to leading golf courses in the country, Alabang's premier business hotel was selected from a host of other hotels.

The Bellevue is geared to meet urgent requirements of events of this magnitude, paying special attention to the needs of golfers. Aside from 222 well-appointed deluxe and suite rooms where guests can relax, it also has modern communications facilities which include the latest in Internet technology.

Most golfers are also corporate travelers, that's why the Bellevue has four function rooms, private offices, workstations and secretarial service that can handle business-related services—typing, letter writing, faxing—24 hours a day, seven days a week are available as well.

Other leisure amenities open for golfers are the Cafe D' Asie, the hotel's main dining area which serves authentic Asian cuisine, the 20/20 entertainment center with a music lounge, main and sports bar and The Bellevue Spa Club with its fully equipped gym, luxurious spa and beauty salon. The hotel also offers a variety of special golf packages featuring three of Manila's most challenging golf courses. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

JOSE Mari Cacho, Bellevue general manager Cindy Tan Jarabata and Johnny Litton

Waterfront wins Frontliner of the Year

WATERFRONT Hotels and Casinos' bagged two awards for the Front Liner of the Year title in the Department of Tourism and the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp's Kalakbay Awards 2003.

The chain's two entries, waiters Danny Barrientos of Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino (WCCHC) and Julito Erana of Waterfront Airport Hotel and Casino (WAHC), both stood out in job performance, character and exemplary deeds. Criteria include work attitude, human relations, punctuality and attendance, demonstrations of courage, integrity, dedication and initiative in their work. Qualifications were assessed through performance ratings, guest commendations and documented information appraised and signed by the company's Human Resources Department.

Barrientos, a waiter at WCCHC's Café Fortuna, has been employed for five years. Colleagues attest how he works exceptionally by being positive, punctual, and courteous. He is known to comply with rules and regulations and is considered an excellent team player in his department.

Erana, a waiter at WAHC's Café Uno, has been employed since 1998. Erana has been rewarded with numerous commendation letters, both from the company and from satisfied guests. He was nominated five times for Star of the Quarter since 1998 and finally won the title in 2002.

Waterfront Hotels and Casinos aim to lead in the tourism industry by committing to provide total customer satisfaction through warm Filipino hospitality. Positioning itself as a premier hotel chain caring for finer customer relation details, Waterfront Hotels and Casinos' central tenet is to continually empower its employees through training and programs. This not only to obtain efficient and better service delivery but also to contribute to the employees' individual and career growth.

Astoria Plaza PR man Ruiz promoted

THE MANAGEMENT and ownership of Astoria Plaza is pleased to announce the promotion of Manuel L. Ruiz to director of marketing communications and public relations effective Dec. 3. Ruiz was the Residence's public relations manager since June of this year. Ruiz brings to Astoria Plaza years of intensive experience in the realm of marketing and corporate communications, public relations and overall hotel operations. Ruiz will continue to spearhead Astoria Plaza's aggressive marketing and public relations campaign in close coordination with the director of sales and will continue to actively play a role in the endeavors of the sales and marketing department.

House of Yuletide cheer, delightful surprises

DELICIOUSLY adorned with the sweetest trimmings from cookies and candies to chocolate bars and lollipops, kids and adults alike will swoon with delight and childlike wonder as they walk into Mandarin Oriental and its Manila's Gingerbread House, a fanciful and enchanting structure filled with delectable yuletide goodies from the hotel's famous deli and bakery.

Open throughout December, Mandarin Oriental's Gingerbread House is located at the hotel's lobby. A satellite outlet stands at the Ayala Alabang Center's Corte de las Palmas' upper ground level near California Pizza Kitchen (CPK).

Built by Mandarin Oriental's award-winning pastry team led by "Chefs on Parade" champions Ernesto Babaran, Mario Quiambao, and Edgardo Butawan, the Gingerbread House proffers the finest selection of speciality items such as homemade pralines, Dresdener Stollens, chocolate log pies, Christmas puddings, English fruitcakes, duck and liver pate to the finest selection of European cheeses, wines, carvings and other Deli treats perfect for holiday celebrations. The impeccable display also features a variety of elegant Christmas hampers filled with the finest assortment of delicacies.

The Gingerbread House at the Mandarin Oriental's lobby is open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily while its satellite outlet at the Alabang Town Center operates during mall hours until Dec. 30.

For further details, call the Mandarin Deli at 750-8888 extension 2415.

'Urinetown'...

From page A29

end the year on a solid note, MTV presents a rock-solid concert that will blow your mind away: "Tigas: MTV Rock Solid." The event which will blast off tomorrow, Dec. 12, featuring the country's biggest and coolest rock bands led by 2003 MTV Asia Awards nominee Rivermaya, Slapshock and Greyhoundz.

MTV will be staging the event out of town—at the Wow Northern Philippines Hilaga in San Fernando, Pampanga (formerly Paskuhan Village). MTV Philippines is offering a free ride on two air-conditioned buses to the first 100 people who will go to the MTV studios at Fort Bonifacio on Friday afternoon. The buses leave MTV at 4:30 pm. Free Red Horse beer will be given to the lucky 100.

"Tigas: MTV Rock Solid" is MTV's way of saying thank you to all its viewers for a great rocking year.

Personal

BONNE anniversaire to Concert Queen **Pops Fernandez** who also has a throne in my heart. Luvyah, Pipay dear!

Birthday kisses to my doll-like *inaanak* **Alyanna Martinez** (**Albert** and **Liezl**'s pride and joy). I truly love you like my own!

Birthday cheers to my fave *gimik* mate and sweetest cousin **Tricia Jimenez**!

Happy birthday to a time-tested friend and esteemed colleague—**Butch Francisco**.

For feedback, e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

Acoustic at Elbow Room

SHOW TIME

THE ELBOW Room at the Podium brings you its December lineup of acoustic performers.

On Wednesdays (Dec. 10 and 17), the Lucid Band plays your favorite acoustic songs.

On Thursdays (Dec. 11 and 18), Jay, April and Erol of the MP3 will serenade you with acoustic favorites like "Game of Love," "A Thousand Miles," "Love Moves," "If You're Not the One," "Someday We'll Know" and many others.

Singer, songwriter and indie producer Rica Arambulo sings every Friday (Dec. 12 and 19) with an acoustic mix of R&B, classical, jazz, rock, new age and folk.

On Saturdays (Dec. 13 and 20), Maegan Aguilar and the Flower Child will give you a dose of their own kind of music.

Located on the 5th level of The Podium at the Ortigas Center in Pasig City, the Elbow Room is also known for its exquisite Asian fusion cuisine, as well as for its unique concept of being a billiard, bar and restaurant all rolled into one.

For inquiries and reservations, call 634-1404.

ARANETA CENTER
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	ALIPIN
Ali 2	ELF
Ali 3	CABIN FEVER
Ali 4	MYSTIC RIVER
Ali 5	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
Ali 6	RUGRATS
Ali 7	GOODBOY

NEW FIESTA CARNIVAL
NOW OPEN 10AM TO PM DAILY

ARANETA COLISEUM

DEC 14	PBA FINALS (if necessary)
DEC 15	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
DEC 17	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
DEC 23	DISNEY ON ICE 8:00 PM

Opens Dec. 23 DISNEY ON ICE "Beauty & The Beast"
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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

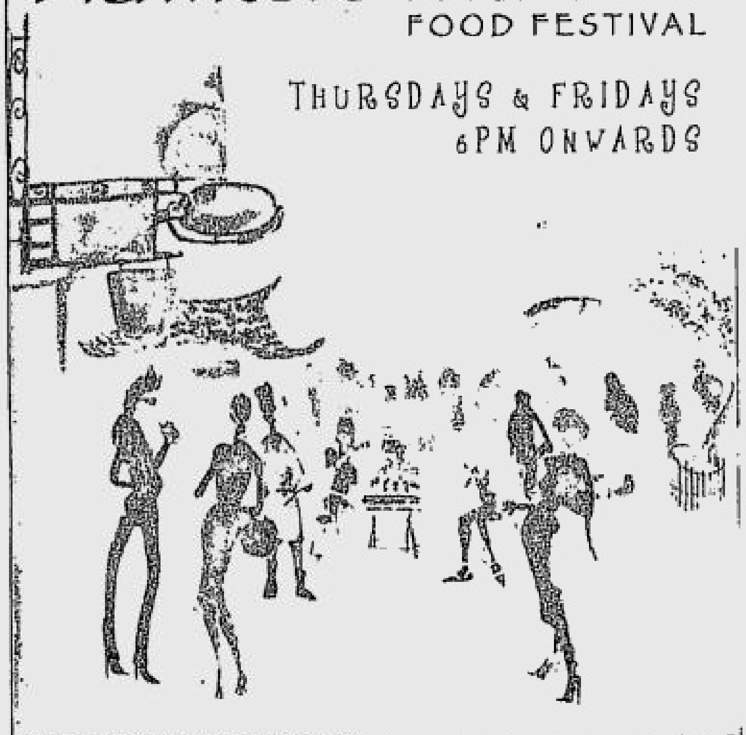
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ALIPIN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	ANG BABAE SA BREAKWATER
B	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MR. SUAVE
CINEMA-2	ALIPIN
CINEMA-3	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	OUT OF TIME
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	STAR RUNNER
CINEMA-6	CHAVIT
CINEMA-7	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
CINEMA-8	18 KARATS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	GOOD BOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MYSTIC RIVER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	RUGRATS GO WILD
CINEMA-12	CABIN FEVER
CINEMA-14	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-15	ELF
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	WRONG TURN
CINEMA-1	CHAVIT
CINEMA-2	LOONEY TUNES
CINEMA-4	DARK BLUE
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ELF GP 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00	GOODBOY GP 12:00, 1:50, 3:40, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	RUGRATS GO WILD GP 12:30, 2:20, 4:10, 6:00, 7:50, 9:40
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY PG13 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	CABIN FEVER R18 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00	MYSTIC RIVER R13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20

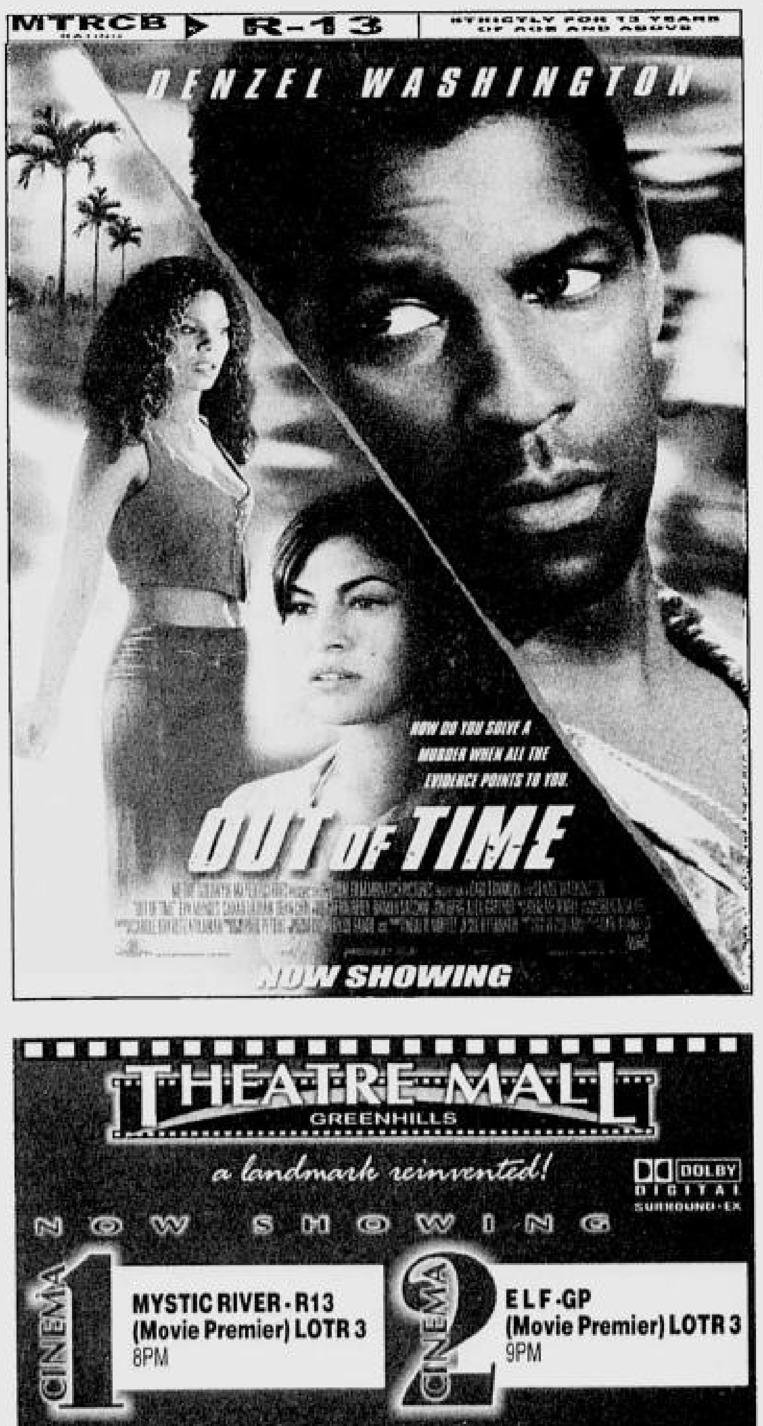
MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

Hawkers Market
FOOD FESTIVAL
THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS
6PM ONWARDS



POWER PLANT MALL
AT ROCKWELL

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	MYSTIC RIVER - R13 (Movie Premier) LOTR 3 8PM
CINEMA 2	ELF-GP (Movie Premier) LOTR 3 9PM

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PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 ELF	1 ELF	ArtFilm 1 BALZAC 12:20, 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 1 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 12:40, 2:50, 5:00, 7:10, 9:20, 11:30	THX 1 MYSTIC RIVER
2 MYSTIC RIVER	2 THE GRUDGE	2 MYSTIC RIVER 12:35, 3:25, 6:15, 9:05	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 2 MYSTIC RIVER 11:05, 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:15	2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 CABIN FEVER	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 11:40, 1:50, 4:00, 6:10, 8:20, 10:30	REGINE VELASQUEZ Dec. 12 & 13, 19 & 20 - 9pm	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	3 ELF
4 OUT OF TIME	4 GOOD BOY		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 ELF 12:25, 2:35, 4:45, 6:55, 9:05, 11:15	4 GOOD BOY
	5 RUGRATS GO WILD		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 OUT OF TIME 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	5 RUGRATS GO WILD
	6 MYSTIC RIVER			
	7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2			

For screening times, call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice.
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MOVIE GUIDE
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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	JEEPERS CREEPERS
2 (SDDS)	CABIN FEVER
3 (DTS)	OUT OF TIME
4 GOLD (DTS ES)	GOOD BOY
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	RUGRATS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	MYSTIC RIVER
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX)	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
8	MR. SUAVE
9	ELF
10	THE GRUDGE-1

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3 (DTS)	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6 (DTS)	RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX	RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 & 3
(Pasay) tel 833.3290, 833.3274

1	ALIPIN
2	STAR RUNNER
3	MR SUAVE

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	OUT OF TIME
2	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3	CABIN FEVER
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	MYSTIC RIVER
5	ALIPIN

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	ALIPIN
2	CABIN FEVER
3	MYSTIC RIVER
4	INTERNET QUEEN
5	STAR RUNNER
6	OUT OF TIME

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1	THE TRAIN
2	PILYA

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 893-4225, 892-2503
MYSTIC RIVER

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2	LOONEY TUNES

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC
tel 930.9515
1
2
3

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) TEL. 776-74-21

1	SUGAT SA PURI
2	ALIPIN NG ALIW
3	
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (SDDS)	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	ALIPIN
6	RUGRATS GO WILD
7 (DTS)	MYSTIC RIVER
8 (SDDS)	JEEPER CREEPERS
9 (DOLBY)	GOOD BOY

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364-3781

1	ALIPIN
2	MR. SUAVE
3	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 (SDDS)	CABIN FIVER
5	STAR RUNNER
6 (DOLBY)	INTERNET QUEEN
7 (DTS)	JEEPER CREEPERS
8	BABAE SA BREAK WATER
9	AKO, IKAW, SIYA

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082

1	ALIPIN
2 (SDDS)	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 (DTS)	STAR RUNNER
4 (DOLBY)	CABIN FIVER
5	MR SUAVE

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	ALIPIN
2	MR. SUAVE
3 (DTS)	CABIN FIVER
4	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
5 (SDDS)	STAR RUNNER

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	RESERVE

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	ALIPIN
Lords	ALIPIN
Jennet	RESERVE

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	GOOD BOY
2	ALIPIN
3	MR SUAVE
4	RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2	GOOD BOY
3	RESERVE
4	CABIN FIVER
5	ALIPIN

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	ALIPIN
2	MEDALLION

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta
ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400

1	ALIPIN
2	ELF
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CAVIN FEVER
4 (SDDS)	MYSTIC RIVER
5 (DTS)	JEEPERS CREEPERS-2
6	RUGRATS GO WILD
7	GOOD BOY

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
TEL. (049) 837-0926

1	OUT OF TIME
2	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
3 (DTS)	WISHER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	ELF
2 (DTS)	STAR RUNNER
3 (DOLBY)	OUT OF TIME
4	THE PHONE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	STAR RUNNER
2 (DOLBY)	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 (DTS)	OUT OF TIME
4	WISHER

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.6771

1	WRONG TURN
2	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 (DOLBY)	LOONEY TUNE
4	

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	MY BOSS DAUGHTER
2	SEX SCANDAL
3 (DOLBY)	WRONG TURN
4 (DTS)	LOONEY TUNES

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305

1 (DOLBY)	
2 (DTS)	
3	

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	THE TRAIN
2	EVANGELENE KATORSE
3 (DTS)	18 KARAT
4	TUKSO NG PANAHON

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	STAR RUNNER
2	THE PHONE
3 (DTS)	OUT OF TIME
4	SEX SCANDAL
5	AKO, IKAW, SIYA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	MAPUPULANG LABI
2	BABAE SA BREAK WATER
3	

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1	STAR RUNNER
2	OUT OF TIME
3	MAPUPULANG LABI

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2	ANG BABAE SA BREAK WATER
3 (DTS)	LOONEY TUNES
4 (DOLBY)	DARK BLUE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2 (DTS)	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
2	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3	

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	OUT OF TIME
2	FIGHTING TEMPTATION
3	STAR RUNNER
4	BABAE SA BREAK WATER

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887-5001 TO 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	COLD CREEK MANOR
2	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 (DTS ES)	OUT OF TIME
4	FIGHTING TEMPTATION

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887-0121

1	COLD CREEK MANOR
2	OUT OF TIME
3 (DOLBY)	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
4 (DTS)	FIGHTING TEMPTATION

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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'Urinetown' very very funny

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

"I WAS falling off my seat, laughing," **Bobby Garcia** said, remembering the first time he caught 'Urinetown,' in a super-small theater off-Broadway."

Even if the American Theater of Actors seemed much too cramped and crowded, the Filipino stage director, the moving spirit behind the cutting-edge Atlantis Productions, had a rollicking evening watching "Urinetown," so much so that he thought of clinching the rights to the play and mounting it with his theater troupe in Manila.

It was the little show that could, and did. It even won three Tony Awards, not to mention rave reviews from the likes of **Liz Smith** and **Rex Reed.**

The success story that is "Urinetown," a product of the 1999 Fringe Festival, is an inspiring tale for all struggling theater artists stranded on the margins, just waiting for that elusive big break. Bobby, who watched the Fringe and Broadway versions, was simply hooked.

When it finally moved to the Great White Way, to the Henry Miller Theater to be exact, its opening fell on Sept. 13, 2001, two days after 9/11.

"It was actually supposed to open on September 11 itself," said Bobby. "Quite understandably, they had to move the premiere. Still, the response was overwhelming. For a show to open and to continue to run even after 9-11 is just amazing. Now, it is going on its third year."

Bobby believes that "Urinetown" is a good ole "musical comedy" at heart. "What is so fun about it is that it spoofs other great musicals, from West Side Story to Fiddler on the Roof, from Annie to Evita, from The Cradle Will Rock to Les Miz.

"I am doing Urinetown for the sheer fun of it, but also because I love musical theater. I've always loved musicals. And Urinetown is a celebration of musical theater. And it makes great fun of it at the same time. It lampoons everything you can imagine, but within the context of a very good story."

It's about greed, betrayal, politics, all the steamy, sleazy, seedy aspects of life in the big bad city.

"There's a drought," said Bobby, explaining the plot. "There are no private toilets anymore and a corporation has taken over all the public restrooms. Thus, people have to pay to pee. And in the poorest part of town, people could hardly afford to pee in the dirtiest public urinal. So they decide to rebel and revolt."

"Urinetown" also resonates well, juxtaposed with present-day Philippine realities. "It's very relevant, actually," he said. "It's about corruption. And there's also a romantic angle. The love story of the poor boy and rich girl. There's melodrama and music. It's very telenovela in a roundabout way. Actually, it's also very Pinoy in its humor.

"More than anything, I just hope the audience will have a really good time. Because it is very, very funny."

As usual, Bobby has gathered a top-notch cast and crew. Playing the lead roles of the star-crossed lovers **Bobby Strong** and **Hope Cladwell** are young thespians **Noel Rayos** and **Cathy Azanza. Michael de Mesa** is Caldwell B. Cladwell, while **Jinky Llamanzares** is Penelope Pennywise. **Pheona Barranda** is Little Sallyand **Jett Pangan** is Officer Lockstock.

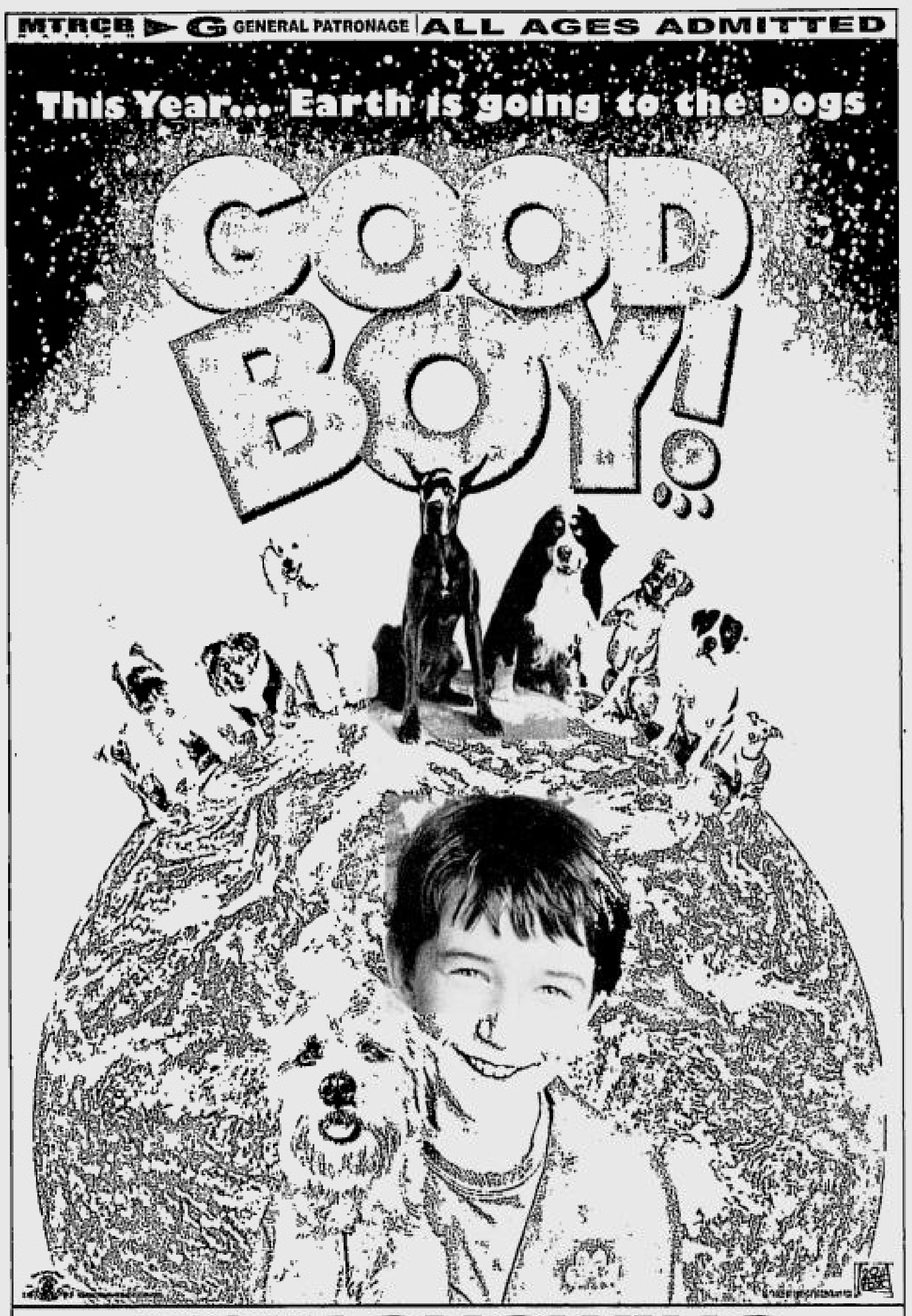
The Atlantis production of "Urinetown" opened at the RCBC Plaza last Dec. and will run until Dec. 21.

'Tigas'

IT'S been a rock-solid year for MTV. To

URINETOWN/ A28

MTRCB ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE | ALL AGES ADMITTED


This Year... Earth is going to the Dogs
GOOD BOY!

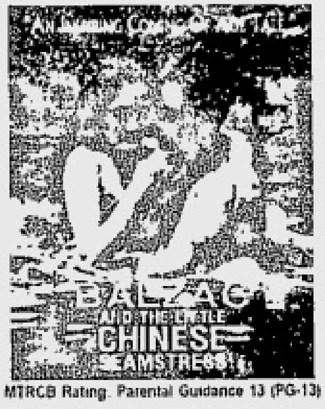
NOW SHOWING

Yule Love our Acrobats going mad in Acromania
An action-packed trampoline show featuring Olympic-trained acrobats from Australia
AYALA CENTER MAKATI
Dec 7 - 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm
Dec 8 - 1pm, 3pm, 5pm
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Dec 12,13 & 14
11am, 3pm, 6pm
AYALA CENTER CEBU
Dec 19 & 20
11am, 4pm, 7pm
Dec 21
11:30am, 3:30pm
6:30pm
ALASKA BLAZE
TOWN
AYALA CENTER CEBU
XV

AYALA CINEMAS

NOW SHOWING EXCLUSIVELY AT ArtFilm

"A CINEMATIC POEM."
— Kirk Honeycutt, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER


BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS

OFFICIAL SELECTION CANNES 2002
BEST FOREIGN FILM - 2003 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINEE

BALZAC
AND THE LITTLE CHINESE
SEAMSTRESS

In China, in the early 70's during the dark years of the "Cultural Revolution", Ma and Luo, two teenagers considered as "bourgeois intellectuals" by the system, are sent to the small village of Sichuan in order to be "reeducated" into contact with the population. In this sinister period where the majority of books are prohibited and weddings before the age of 25 are illegal, Ma and Luo will clandestinely discover literature and love at the same time.

MTRCB Rating. Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)

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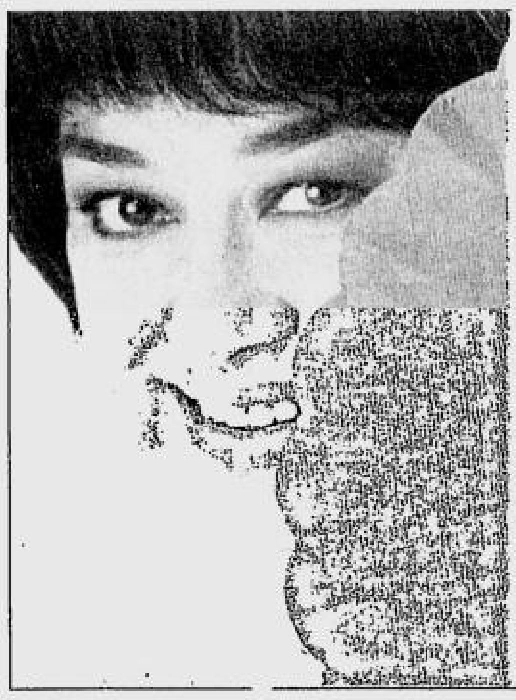

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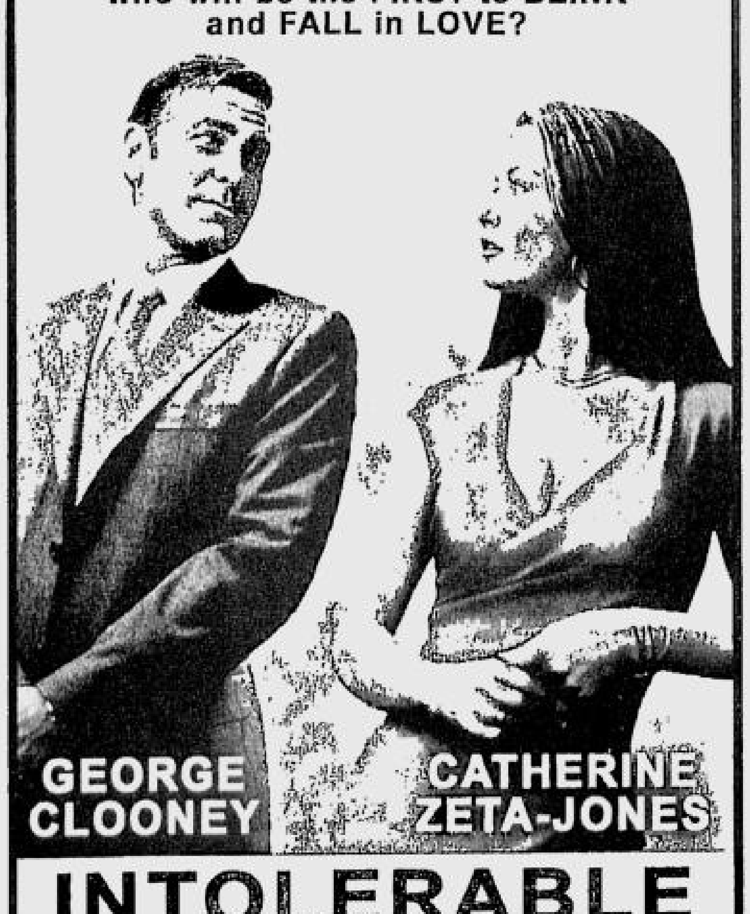
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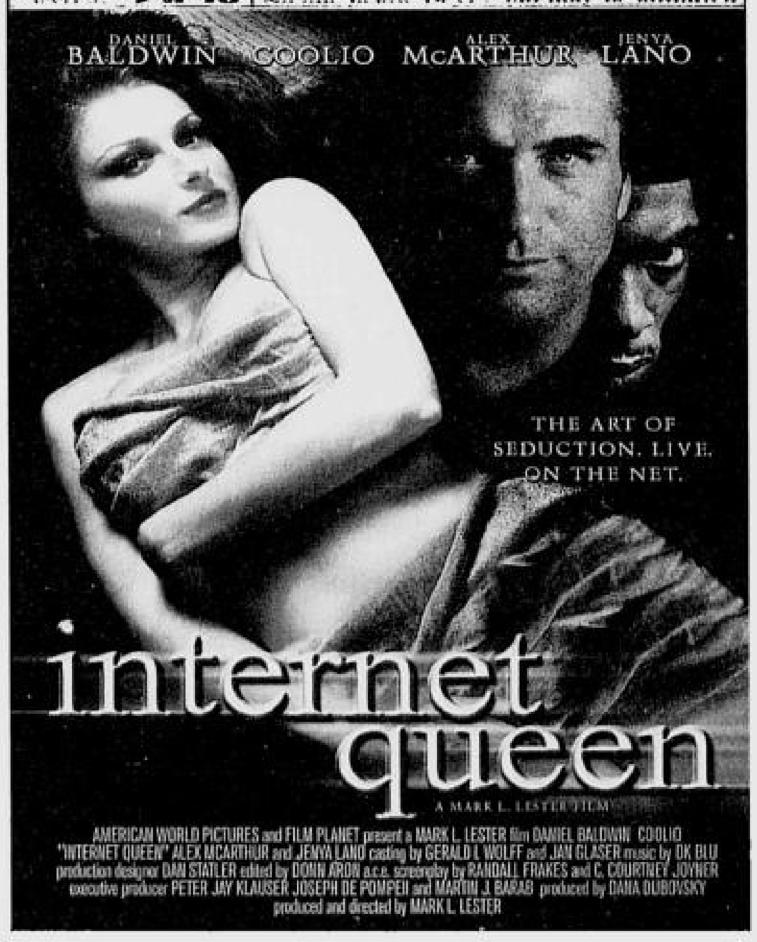
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"MANO PO 2" with (clockwise from front left) Judy Ann Santos, Lorna Tolentino, Christopher de Leon and Kris Aquino

"HOMECOMING," with Elizabeth Oropesa (right) and Alessandra de Rossi

The biggest, the brightest

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

THIS could be the biggest and most successful Metro Manila Film Festival ever.

Caloocan City Mayor Rey Malonzo, who is also the head of the festival's selection committee, made this fearless forecast days after he watched at least three of the nine festival entries.

"The entries are all well-made," claimed Malonzo, who is also a movie actor. "Moviegoers will enjoy all the films."

Traditionally, the number of participating movies ranges from four to seven. This is the first time that there are nine entries.

Last July, 19 proposed entries were submitted to the selection committee. Based on story line, proposed cast and production plan, the committee chose 10 entries.

Star Cinema's "Milan," which stars Piolo Pascual and Claudine Barretto, led the 10 chosen entries. But in September, the movie's producers and director backed out of the festival because the movie would not meet the festival's play date.

"I believe this festival would be the most successful ever," said Malonzo. "I think we have the best set of entries."

Most of the entries have big budgets.

Leading the performers in the entries are stars known for their bankability and their performances, such as Sharon Cuneta ("Crying Ladies"), actors Richard Gomez, Maricel Soriano ("Filipinas"), and "Mano Po 2's" Lorna Tolentino, Zsa Zsa Padilla and Christopher de Leon.

Other big names in the festival include Kris Aquino ("Mano Po 2"), Vic Sotto ("Fantastic Man"), Bong Revilla, Regine Velasquez and Ogie Alcasid (all of "Captain Barbell"), Vhong Navarro ("Gagamboy"), Rica Peralejo ("Malikmata"), Dawn Zulueta and Aiko Melendez (both of "Filipinas") and Judy Ann Santos ("Mano Po 2").

Veteran stars in some of the entries, like Elizabeth Oropesa ("Homecoming"), Hilda Koronel ("Crying Ladies"), Armida Siguion-Reyna ("Filipinas") and Susan Roces ("Mano Po 2").

"Our producers have seen in the previous festivals how quality movies became box office hits," noted the Caloocan mayor. "Now, they attract moviegoers by producing outstanding films."

In the previous festivals, the best picture winners, like "Jose Rizal," "Muro Ami," "Tanging Yaman" and "Mano Po" also became box office hits.

Malonzo also predicted a tight race among the entries both at the box office and in the awards.

The nine festival entries are "Mano Po 2" directed by Erik Matti, Regal Films; "Crying Ladies," by Mark Meily, Basfilms/United Productions; "Fantasticman," by Tony Reyes, Octoarts; "Filipinas," by Joel Lamangan, Viva Films; "Homecoming," by Gil Portes, Teamwork Productions; Malikmata," by Jose Javier Reyes, Canary Films; "Bridal Shower," by Jeffrey Jeturian, Seiko Films; "Captain Barbell," by Cirio Santiago, Premiere Entertainment; and "Gagamboy," by Erik Matti, Regal Films.

"CRYING LADIES," with (from left) Angel Espiritu, Sharon Cuneta and Hilda Koronel

"MALIKMATA," with Rica Peralejo

"FANTASTICMAN," with Vic Sotto and Ara Mina

Elimination without humiliation

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST Friday's GMA-7's "Star-struck" proved to be confounding and cautionary viewing fare for us.

The 10 remaining finalists were each made to act out "famous" scenes from local movies. We noted right off that most of the male contestants had difficulty enunciating their dialogue clearly.

Obviously, diction lessons are direly needed here! This is a basic requirement that must be met before the guys can even be given acting exercises. First things first!

As for the "famous" scenes, they turned out not to be good gauges of acting talent, because the newcomers pretty much simply imitated the performances of the scenes' original players.

Imitation is definitely not a yardstick for good acting talent!

Instead of making tyros ape "famous" performances, they should be asked to improvise dramatic or comic scenes as themselves, so viewers will know how genuine and deep their emotions are.

We were impressed to note, however, that the 10 starlets had already gained their respective corps of adulating fans, who cheered their every move. This demonstrates the star-making power of television, because these youths were unknowns at the start of the "Star-struck" series of shows, only a few months ago.

On the debit side, we saw that the female starlets had excessively thick make-up on. This is one of the negative aspects of show biz in these parts, and it's unfortunate that GMA-7 has allowed its starlets to fall prey to it. Since they're young talents, they should look fresh and natural, so minimal make-up should be the rule for them.

The most cautionary aspect of last Friday's show was its "elimination" element. Five of the 10 were pointed out as the "weakest" in the bunch, from which one would not be asked to come back the following Monday.

We know that this weekly elimination element is part of the show's format, but it's poorly handled. It's cruel to single out the five "weakest," because it's like branding them as losers, too.

So, just name the person to be eliminated, and be done with it. And please don't shame him or her further by having the TV camera follow the "eliminated one" backstage, aggravating his or her misery.

We suppose that the weekly eliminations are intended to toughen up the "survivors," and to make them try even harder in succeeding weeks. But it must be done less painfully.

We should all remember that the finalists are young people who may be adversely affected by rejection, public humiliation and excessive competition.

Indeed, the "eliminated one" wasn't the only anguished person on the show last Friday. Most of the "survivors" were also in tears.

It isn't fun to bond with your peers for months on end, and then see them being eliminated one by one, from week to week. So, instead of making the eliminations a public spectacle, announce it in private, let the eliminated finalist leave in dignity away from the TV cameras' view, and just let the studio and home audience know about it by calling the "survivors" back onstage.

This may not be as "dramatic" and "exciting" as the present public eliminations (and humiliations), but it'll be much kinder to the young people involved—those who get axed, and even those who survive.

'Wave Sessions'

PAOLO Santos' latest album, "Wave Sessions," showcases cover renditions of classics and contemporary hits. Cuts include "For You," "Swept Away," "Can We Still Be Friends," "Because of You" and "Close." The album has 21 tracks in all.

Bublé's Christmas album

MICHAEL Bublé plays musical Santa with the release of his first Christmas album. The songs he interprets are "White Christmas," "I'll be Home for Christmas," "The Christmas Song," "Grown-Up Christmas List" and "Let It Snow."

Acoustic Christmas

THE DISCOVERY Suites' Serendipity Lounge will feature on Dec. 12 and 19 the six-member musical group, 3rdegree, which won the 2001 Muziklaban Band Competition.

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Camacho says gov't in a fiscal crisis

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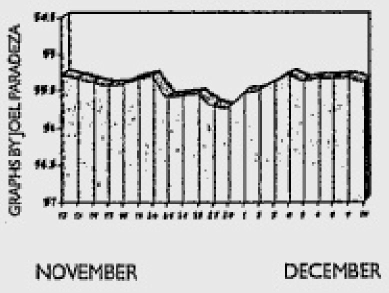

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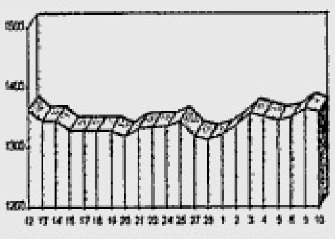


(See stock market report on Page B2)

THE MAIN share index ended lower in a mixed session yesterday, weighed down by profit-taking in select blue chips, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed down 5.75 points, or 0.4 percent, at 1,360.08, after rising 1.2 percent Tuesday.

Profit-taking hit blue chips Ayala Corp., which fell 10 centavos, or 2 percent, to P4.90, and its unit, Ayala Land, fell 10 centavos, or 1.8 percent, to P5.40.

Westlink Global Equities chair Rommel Macapagal told Dow Jones Newswires the market corrected after managing to break the 1,360 initial resistance level Tuesday.

"The market managed to hold above the 1,340 support, and now it's testing the 1,360 level, to see if it's possible to make that level the market's new support," Macapagal said.

Another factor that dampened market sentiment was the losses suffered by Asian equities markets, said Macapagal, which may have been triggered by Wall Street's overnight losses.

Tuesday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 0.4 percent to 9,923.42.

"The 10,000-point level over at Wall Street is still considered a key level, so there's uncertainty if the market can break that level and stay above that level," Macapagal said.

Traders maintained that the market has already discounted yesterday's official proclamation of popular movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. as the standard bearer of a coalition of opposition parties in next year's presidential elections.

By Clarissa S. Batino

NOW on the other side of the fence, former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday criticized the government's failure to implement crucial revenue reforms that have placed the country on the brink of a fiscal crisis.

Speaking before the Philippine Economic Society, Camacho said the Philippines' high-level of debt was not sustainable unless the government would act fast and implement revenue measures that would help reverse the erosion in the fiscal sector.

"Right now, we are in a fiscal crisis. We have a high debt level that is not sustainable. As a result, the cost of borrowing had gone up for the government because of the loss in confidence," Camacho said.

However, he stressed that even when he was in government, he had already been espousing these views. He said his stint in government had "radicalized" him.

Perceived as one of the more credible Cabinet officials of the Macapagal administration, Camacho shocked the financial markets when he announced his resignation on Nov. 21.

The government said it could bring down the budget deficit this year to about P200 billion against the P202 billion target, but the P197.8-billion target for 2004 would have to be reviewed to consider the non-passage of revenue measures that were included in next year's fiscal program.

Camacho said the current political system was not equipped to deal with the fiscal problem. Congress, based on his experience, had been moving very slowly on important legislative reforms.

CAMACHO

"Right now, the government doesn't have the means to deal with the present problem," he noted.

He lamented that crucial bills like the indexation of beer and tobacco taxes, the transformation of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and the securitization bill remained pending in Congress. Even bills already ratified by Congress such as the rationalization of the documentary stamp tax and the imposition of the gross receipt tax have been stalled.

Camacho said he would support a shift to a unicameral parliamentary system to improve the political system in the country.

The finance chief, even when he was in government, had warned of an impending debt crisis in the next three to five years if the administration would fail to solve the budget deficit problem by improving tax collection and even mandating new taxes.

The Philippines suffered from a debt crisis in the early 1980s when the government was unable to borrow to finance maturing debts after foreign creditors expressed alarm over the extensive risks the country posed during the time of the late dictator

CAMACHO/B2

Gov't keeps Nov. budget deficit under control

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT was able to keep its budget deficit under control in November and would safely meet the ceiling of P202 billion for the full year on the back of cautious expenditure management, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said yesterday.

Boncodin also told reporters at the sidelines of a forum held by the Philippine Economic Society that the government would not front-load spending next year, amid fears by some sectors that there would be overspending during the run-up to the May presidential elections.

She also noted that there was still a leeway of P8 billion before breaching the deficit ceiling for the year.

"The November (level) is still within target because the expenditures that were within my control were under control," Boncodin said, noting however that there were expenditures which were beyond her capacity to control such as interest payments, which are automatically appropriated in the budget.

Asked about concerns on overspending prior to elections next year, Boncodin said: "It remains to be seen. It will always be a concern for everyone, but to see is to believe. As for us, w are maintaining discipline."

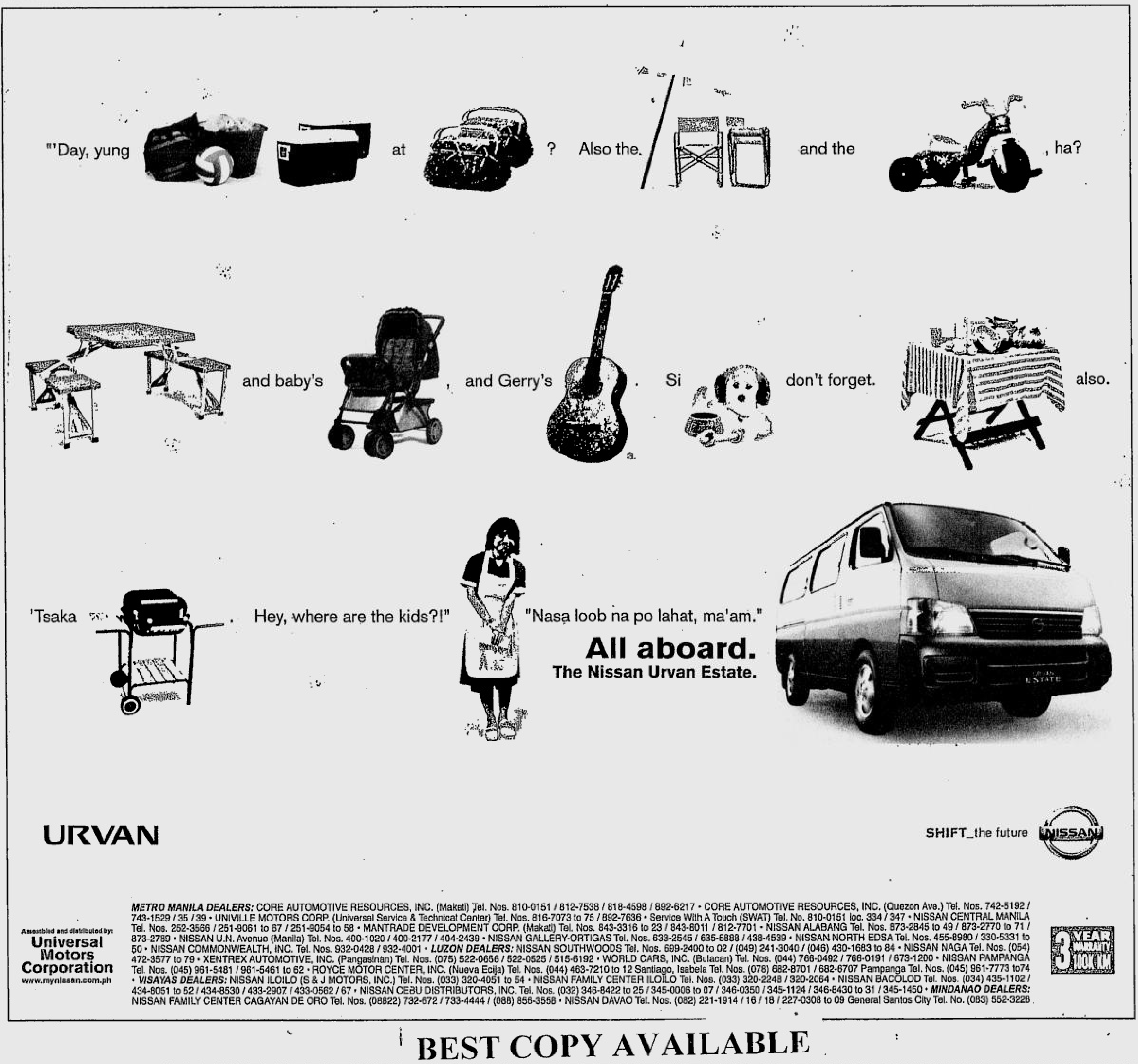
"It is not because that it is election year and we are worried. We have planted the seeds and we only have to continue and the only way you can prove that is to continue the fiscal discipline," she said.

Former Economic Planning Secretary Felipe Medalla yesterday said during the forum that in order to boost confidence, the government must lower its debt-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio and curb the budget deficit.

"We don't need need to wipe out the deficit. I think a deficit which is 2 percent of GDP is okay," Medalla said.

For the first 10 months of the year, the government incurred a budget deficit of P163.88 billion or still below the P171.88-billion ceiling for the period. Some overspending was accommodated in the third quarter to help perk up the economy.

It was earlier reported that the Bureau of Internal Revenue, the government's main revenue-collecting agency, had exceeded its revenue target for the month of November.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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

WHATEVER the Palace says, you cannot grant people free lethal injections, just because they never heard of the company called Federal Land.

In the stock market, for instance, some think that the company has something to do with government housing in the United States. You know, for all those "homeless" in the streets!

It turns out that Federal Land is a low profile but big-time local real estate company, mainly owned by banker George Ty and his very own Metrobank group.

Typical of the stock market, they are whispering its name in vain, but not because Metrobank is the biggest bank in the country, although it also happens to be a publicly listed company.

Now Federal Land is developing a huge portion of the reclamation area at the Manila Bay on Roxas Boulevard, investing billions upon billions in the project.

And as voting tax-paying citizens of this republic, stock market investors also deserve to be warned that, in this country and in this country alone, a reclamation project is dangerous to your health.

* * *

AND THAT, I am happy to report, is true only in this lone Christian country in the whole of Asia, and as we shall see later, only to one particular reclamation project.

And for that we only have our extremely powerful Supreme Court to thank, because it does not mind playing favorites.

Anyway, as one of only a few local groups which put their money where their mouth is, Federal Land is investing a fortune in this country.

What if, after pouring billions into the reclamation project, the Supreme Court also rules against Federal Land later? You know—some 10 years later?

The same thing already happened to another reclamation project at the same Manila Bay on the same Roxas Boulevard in exactly the same situation.

After 10 years, based on whispers in the stock market, the Supreme Court may just wake up one fine day with another legal creation to f..k investors!

* * *

ONLY about a year and a half ago, the Supreme Court nullified that other reclamation project, the one being done by a consortium called Amari, which is now known as Cyberbay, also a publicly listed company like Metrobank.

In 1991, the government-owned firm PEA, the Public Estates Authority, held two public biddings for a reclamation project at the Manila Bay.

Twice, the biddings failed, and so PEA awarded the contract to Amari (now the listed Cyberbay).

About four years later in 1995, Kuya Eddie himself signed the contract between PEA and Amari, in which Amari would put up all the money, would do all the work, and would be paid by PEA for its job after completion.

The administration of Kuya Eddie wanted the reclamation project, because it was part of an urban renewal concept called the Boulevard 2000 Master Plan, something similar to that famous reclaimed-land theme-park in Singapore.

* * *

UNFORTUNATELY, the contract between PEA and Amari was tainted with allegations of a pay-off. The scandal thus led to changes in the contract.

Kuya Eddie himself agreed to adopt the changes, in effect admitting that he was wrong to have signed the earlier contract, in the first place.

Years later, in 1999, the contract went through another review, this time by the Cabinet members of the administration of the man named Band ... Wrist Band.

Wrist Band also approved the contract, which armed it, in effect, with the separate approvals of two Presidents of the Republic.

In the stock market, meanwhile, the public invested in the project. What with the approval of TWO—not just ONE, but TWO—presidents!

Woe to the investors! Without being asked by anybody, the Supreme Court nullified the contract in July last year. Some seven years after!

* * *

JUST recently, in a vote of seven "for" and seven "against," the Supreme Court then decided to deny the appeal of Cyberbay for reconsideration.

After news on the new ruling broke out, by the way, the Supreme Court was treated to some unkind reactions.

One of them came from a bystander, a lawyer, who happens to be the chair emeritus of the UP Law Alumni Association. In short, a big shot lawyer!

Saying he had nothing to do with the Cyberbay case, the lawyer nevertheless put out a paid ad in the INQUIRER, attacking the Supreme Court ruling.

It turned out that, some years ago, the same lawyer won a case in the Supreme Court which was exactly the same as the Cyberbay case. Such forgetful court!

* * *

ALL of a sudden, anyway, to the Supreme Court, the issue in the Cyberbay case was no longer the "constitutionality" of the contract.

Its newest ruling already cited "corruption" in the contract, referring to it as the "grandmother" of all scams or something provocative like that.

No court in the entire universe has ever ruled on that "corruption" yet, although a Senate report claimed that the pay-off actually happened.

But, as the lawyer who put out the ad in the INQUIRER asked, since when did the Senate become the investigating arm of the Supreme Court?

Anyway, the latest Supreme Court ruling also came out the day after Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide won the battle concerning his very own impeachment.

In the stock market, people saw in the ruling an element of revenge against the enemies of Davide, who nevertheless were not the ones damaged by the ruling at all.

* * *

STONED to death by the Supreme Court ruling, of course, was none other than the poor public who trusted the word of two Presidents of the Republic, and so they invested in Cyberbay.

As of last count, those stockholders already numbered some 1,270 in all. They are made up of individuals and such entities as mutual funds, insurance companies, and other so-called institutional investors.

And that's a lot of people!

Moreover, one of the major stockholders of Cyberbay was Prime Orion, owning some 25 percent.

Prime Orion is also a publicly listed company, with some 1,200 stockholders, both individuals and institutions.

In other words, that's a lot of people—those countless thousands—who got hoodwinked by the government itself.

* * *

NOW, based on whispers in the stock market, it turned out that Federal Land actually wrote the Supreme Court about the Cyberbay case.

As I said, Federal Land had exactly the same project, contract, or whatever as Cyberbay's, and so Federal Land perhaps worried about its own interest.

For nobody in this country could ever know what the Supreme Court would do to some publicly listed companies to send them to bankruptcy.

After all, Federal Land is developing 42 hectares of reclaimed land at the Manila Bay, and what if...

Whadayano—the Supreme Court wrote back to Federal Land that its ruling on the Cyberbay case would not affect Federal Land whatsoever. Hmm.

But since the Supreme Court looks upon it with favor, just how different exactly was the Federal Land project from that of Cyberbay?

Well, in the stock market, the people have a standard reply to such a stupid question, and it goes like this:

Question: "What is the difference between a duck?"

Answer: "One of its feet is both the same."

Fil-Hispano prepares to invest in growing call center business

By Doris C. Dumlao

FIL-HISPANO Holdings Corp., which used to be in the ceramic manufacturing business, plans to establish a foothold in the country's fast-growing call center industry.

FH told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that it had signed a memorandum of agreement with call center operator All Asia Customer Service Holdings Ltd. (ACSH) for a possible share-swap deal.

The MOA allows ACSH to conduct a due diligence audit on FH.

FH, on the other hand, would look into the the operations of ACSH's wholly-owned call center subsidiary All-Asia Customer Services Inc.

After the due diligence audit, ACSH could end up acquiring a controlling stake in FH in exchange for FH's acquisition of the call center business.

The company said the deal might require an increase in FH's authorized capital by P600 million.

FH used to be involved in the manufacture and sale of ceramic wall and floor tiles.

In 1997, it changed its primary purpose to that of a holding company and permanently folded up its manufacturing facilities due to unprofitable operations.

Since then, its management has been exploring ways to raise funds to retire its existing loans and announced plans to invest in companies engaged in the Internet, high-technology, media, communication, leisure and entertainment business ventures.

It has been disposing land and other assets related to the ceramics business to generate cash for new ventures.

As of the end of September this year, FH had total assets of P125.77 million while net assets stood at P7.65 million.

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2003	BMW 318 Limousine	Black Sapphire	Black Fabric	3K	Php 1,650,000	
2002	BMW 325 Executive	Oxford Green	Beige Leather	17K	Php 2,100,000	
2003	BMW 325 Executive	Titanium Silver	Gray Leather	10K	Php 2,350,000	
2003	BMW 325 M-Sport	Black Sapphire	Black Leather	1K	Php 2,480,000	
2003	BMW 525 Executive	Sterling Gray	Black Leather	1K	Php 3,200,000	
2003	BMW X5 3.0d Executive	Titanium Silver	Gray Leather	2K	Php 4,380,000	

OTHER PRE-OWNED BMWS

Year	Model	Color	Interior Color	Mileage	Price	Status
1996	BMW 316	Cosmos Black	Black Fabric	55K	Php 620,000	
1997	BMW 320	Calypso Red	Beige Leather	60K	Php 830,000	
1998	BMW 320	Samoa Blue	Black Leather	17K	Php 880,000	Sold
1998	BMW 320	Samoa Blue	Black Fabric	28K	Php 860,000	Sale Pending
2001	BMW 318 Limousine	Cosmos Black	Black Leather	6K	Php 1,450,000	
1996	BMW 523	Arktis Silver	Black Leather	80K	Php 1,280,000	
1997	BMW 523	Aspen Silver	Black Leather	50K	Php 1,450,000	
1999	BMW 520	Arktis Silver	Black Leather	19K	Php 1,875,000	Sale Pending

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Camacho says gov't in a fiscal crisis

From page B1

Marcos.

After the juetengate scandal erupted in October 2000, the country was on the brink of a similar crisis as creditors sought huge spreads on their loans to the Philippine given the perceived risks under the Estrada administration.

The World Bank had expressed concern the other day over the failure of Congress to pass revenue measures, especially the indexation of beer and tobacco excise taxes that would have given the government a windfall collection of P14 billion.

Camacho stressed that the government must focus on reducing the deficit and bringing it down to zero over time because the public debt would continue to swell as the government operates under a fiscal burden.

"Until we balance the budget, we cannot narrow the public debt. If we don't correct it, it could lead to a debt crisis," the finance chief added.

The country's public debt accounts for about 80 percent of its gross domestic product.

Since the government had been operating under a deficit since 1998, the level of debt had increased tremendously while revenue collection had been eroded by corruption and inefficiency. The total public sector debt stood at P5.3 trillion as of end-2002.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 10, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.8	27,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	17	17	110,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45.5	46	45	46	529,100
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	110
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	35	35	34.5	34.5	4,900
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.53	0.55	23,120,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	160,000
Philippine National Bank	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	500
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	27	26.5	27	26,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.75	13.25	12.75	13.25	18,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	26	25.5	26	15,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.2	1.2	290,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1700	1700	1700	1700	200
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	5,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1325	1325	1320	1320	360
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	25	24.75	24.75	44,800
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.66	850,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	765	770	760	765	66,470
Ipeople Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	30,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.041	0.042	0.041	0.041	5,100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.55	2.7	2.55	2.65	31,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.82	0.82	2,850,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co .	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	840	855	840	845	261,690
Ivantage Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	90,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	4,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.75	14.75	14.5	14.75	53,900
Manila Electric Co. B	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	1,027,000
Petron Corp.	2.18	2.18	2.18	2.18	1,059,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	3,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.2	863,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	540,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	68,000
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	450,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	961,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	80,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	38,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	16.75	556,500
Swift Food Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	400,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54	54	53.5	54	46,800
San Miguel Corp. B	63.5	63.5	63	63	51,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	350,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.9	4.9	5,527,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	79,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	200,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.16	0.16	200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	5,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	2,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.09	0.095	0.09	0.095	800,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	1,730,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	790,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	240,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	200,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	750,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	12,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	700,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.02	1.08	1.02	1.08	184,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	18	18	17.75	17.75	651,800
Ionics Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	40,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.96	1.98	1.96	1.98	10,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	50,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	326,000
Music Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	340,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.18	940,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	10,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	3	3	3	3	3,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	54,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.049	0.049	4,300,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.58	550,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	30,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	210,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (PDR)	25	25	24.25	24.25	121,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	14,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0008	0.0008	0.0008	0.0008	44,000,000
WGA - Preferred	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	2,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	400	400	400	400	1,510
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	1,771,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	50,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	50,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	400,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.15	0.17	0.15	0.17	290,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.21	6,880,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,358,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	530,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	390,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.1	0.12	0.1	0.12	400,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	2,358,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	1,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	1	1	1	1	40,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.24	1.3	1.24	1.3	20,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.23	0.23	0.225	0.225	750,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	2,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	7,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	130,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	600,000
Interport Res.	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0036	25,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0036	17,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	113,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0036	116,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,000,000

DISCLOSURES

MULTITECH Investments Corp. postponed its annual stockholders' meeting scheduled on Dec. 19.

* * *

THE BOARD of **Primex Corp.** approved the conversion of 100 million preferred shares into common shares at the rate of one common share for every preferred share held. Also, the board approved the payment of the three years and 2 months cumulative dividends on preferred shares totaling over P15.8 million in the form of common shares valued at P2.50 each.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Filsyn Corp.** were Patricio Lim, Douglas Hsu, Johnny Shih, Champion Lee, Felipe Yap, Renato Diaz, Florentino Herrera III, Jaime Sto. Domingo, David Wang, Thomas James Chorba, Anne Marie Fuentes, Aristotle Villaraza and Armando Samia.

* * *

ALL-ASIA Customer Service Holdings Ltd. may buy a controlling stake in Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp. while the latter may buy the call center business of the former after the two companies conduct a due diligence. investigation on each other.

* * *

EXPORT and Industry Bank disclosed that its president and director, Benjamin Castillo, sold 40 million of his shares. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

December 10, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.815395	1.000000	55.288000
Japan	Yen	0.007622	0.009348	0.516800
United Kingdom	Pound	1.424821	1.747400	96.610300
Hongkong	Dollar	0.105035	0.128815	7.121900
Switzerland	Franc	0.646369	0.792707	43.827200
Canada	Dollar	0.624297	0.765638	42.330600
Singapore	Dollar	0.476254	0.584078	32.292500
Australia	Dollar	0.601990	0.738280	40.818000
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.162966	2.652661	146.660300
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.217439	0.266667	14.743500
Brunei	Dollar	0.474867	0.582377	32.198500
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000096	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.020508	0.025151	1.390500
UAE	Dirham	0.222021	0.272287	15.054200
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.226400	67.805200
Argentina	Peso	0.275937	0.338409	18.710000
Brazil	Real	0.278102	0.341064	18.856700
Denmark	Kroner	0.134374	0.164796	9.111200
India	Rupee	0.017921	0.021978	1.215100
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.214606	0.263193	14.551400
Mexico	New Peso	0.072979	0.089501	4.948300
New Zealand	Dollar	0.526163	0.645286	35.676600
Norway	Kroner	0.123156	0.151039	8.350600
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014263	0.017492	0.967100
South Africa	Rand	0.127703	0.156615	8.658900
Korea	Won	0.000688	0.000844	0.046700
Sweden	Kroner	0.111884	0.137214	7.586300
Syria	Pound	0.018582	0.022789	1.260000
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024010	0.029446	1.628000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000511	0.000627	0.034700

Gov't gets $19M in loan, grant from World Bank

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE WORLD Bank and the Philippine government have signed a $19-million financial package to boost the country's rural electrification program.

The bank said agreements on a $10-million loan and a separate $9-million Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant for the Rural Power Project (RPP) were signed early this week by Finance Officer-in-Charge Juanita Amatong, World Bank Philippines country director Robert Vance Pulley, and Development Bank of the Philippines president Simon Paterno.

This is the first of a four-phase adaptable program loan that will provide up to $150 million over a 14-year period to bankroll the government's rural power development program.

Through this project, the country would make available affordable, reliable and adequate electricity to meet the needs of rural communities in a sustainable manner, the bank said.

It said the project would also contribute toward the global objective of mitigating climate change caused by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through wider use of clean, renewable energy technologies in power generation.

"Access to electricity is a key element in rural development. Whether it is used to provide higher quality lighting for rural homes accustomed to kerosene lamps or provide power for rural industries and micro-businesses, the availability of electricity can make a difference in the lives of people in rural areas," Pulley said.

The project is made up of three components:

- rural electrification sub-projects, which include grid-connected electric cooperative subcomponents and decentralized electrification;
- a partial credit guarantee fund, financed by a United Nations Development Program (UNDP)-Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant, and
- capacity-building assistance, funded by a World Bank-GEF grant, which covers the reduction of market barriers to the commercialization of renewable energy technologies for off grid electrification.

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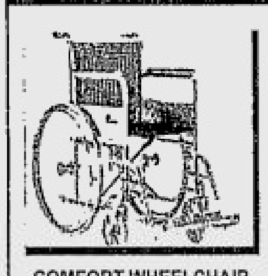

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Progress blooms in La Union

DBP inaugurates new San Fernando, La Union Branch

San Fernando, the "Botanical Garden City of the North", is known as a clean and green city with an environmentally aware and progressive community aggressively pursuing its role as the springboard for development in Region 1.

DBP San Fernando has been an active part of that community, encouraging the pursuit of sustainable and pro-environment development. The branch offers a full range of banking and financial services such as credit facilities for capital assets investments and working capital, and deposit and investment products and services.

Commercial and trading centers, food processing and manufacturing industries, beach resorts and tour operators, pottery and woodcraft makers, farmers and fishermen, and educational institutions in the region have all benefited from DBP services.

To further enhance its role as a catalyst for development in the area, DBP has transferred to a more strategically located branch office at the La Union Electric Company (LUECO) Building II, Quezon Avenue.

For more information, visit, call or e-mail DBP San Fernando, La Union:
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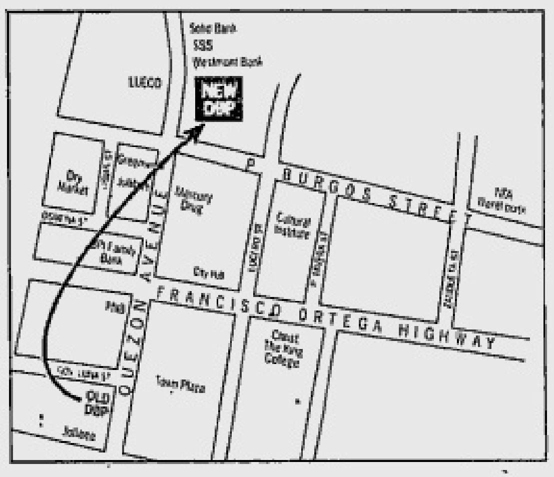
E-mail address: sfdo@devbankphil.com.ph

Branch Head: Senior Manager Margaret C. Tandoc



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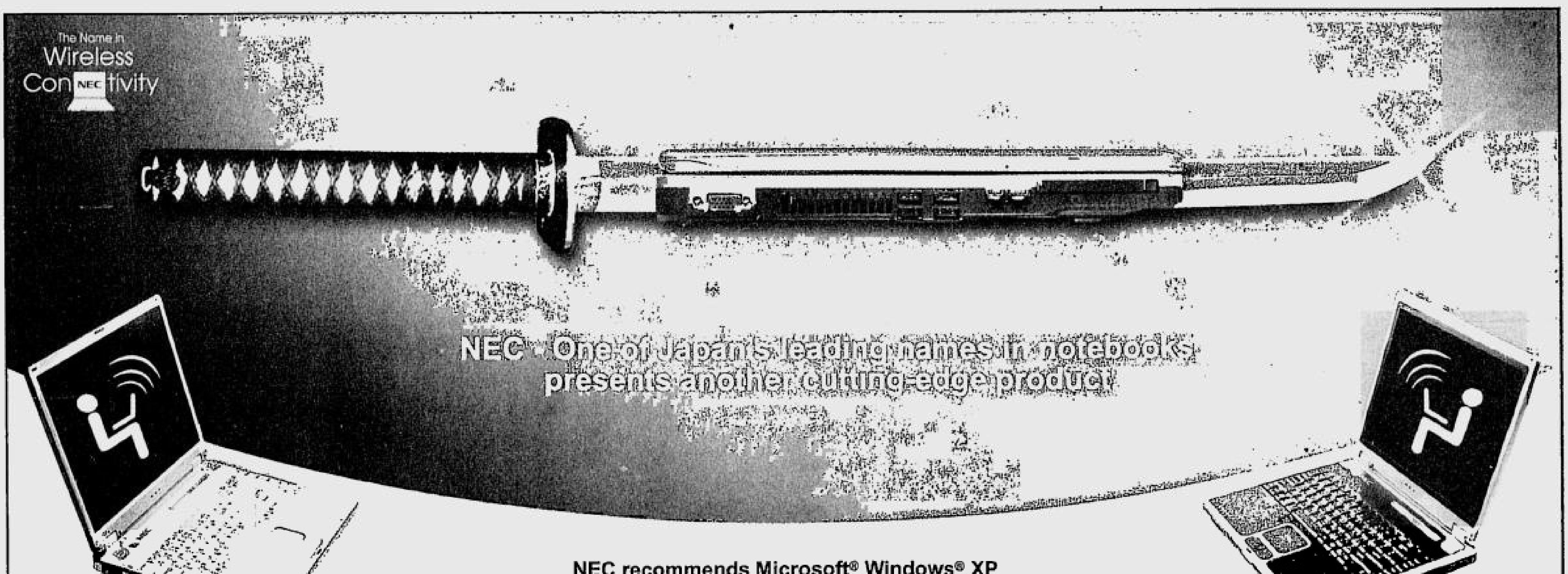
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3 MYSTIC RIVER
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1 **RUGRATS GO WILD**
11:20 FS/11:50 MF/1:40/3:30/5:20/7:10/9:00/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:25 END

2 **MYSTIC RIVER**
11:30 FS/12:00 MF/2:45/5:30/8:15/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:15 END

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2 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40
3 RUGRATS GO WILD 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
4 MYSTIC RIVER 10:50, 1:35, 4:20, 7:05, 9:55
5 CABIN FEVER 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
6 GOOD BOY 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
7 INTERNET QUEEN 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
8 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
9 THE GRUDGE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
10 ELF 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

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2 ELF - 10:10, 12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:00, 9:50
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 RUGRATS GO WILD - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 GOOD BOY - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
6 CABIN FEVER - 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

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3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
4 GOOD BOY
5 CABIN FEVER
6 MYSTIC RIVER
7 ELF
8 JEEPERS CREEPERS

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2 MYSTIC RIVER
3 GOOD BOY
4 CABIN FEVER
5 THE GRUDGE
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS
7 SCARY MOVIE 3
8 INTERNET QUEEN

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JEEPERS CREEPERS 2	6	STAR RUNNER

Bacolod (034)441-0458/59		Iloilo (033)336-8070 to 78
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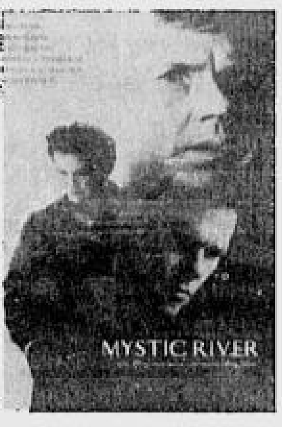

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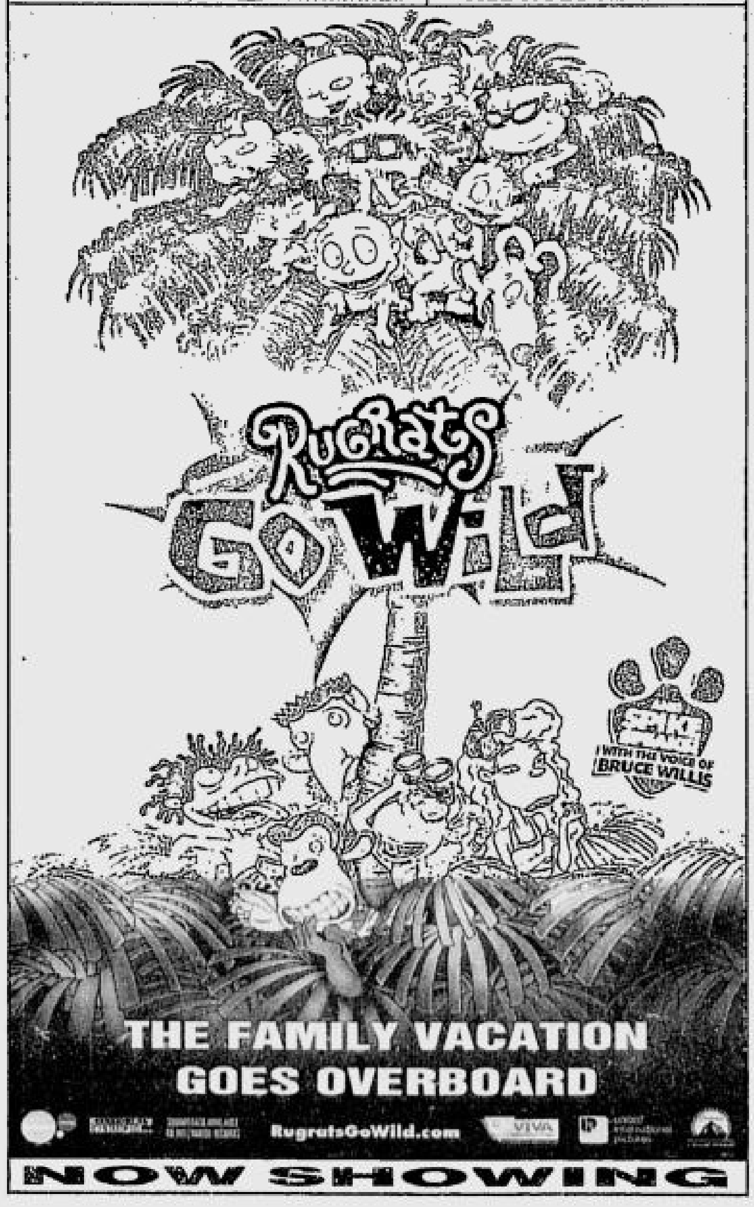

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INVITATION FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Military Academy is inviting interested manufacturers/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement of the Initial Clothing Allowance (ICA) and Combat Clothing and Individual Equipment (CCIE) of PMA Class 2003.

Bid documents can be secured from the Academy Procurement Office, Gen. Lim Hall, Fort del Pilar, Baguio City and PMA Liaison Office, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City during office hours.

A pre-bidding conference is scheduled on December 16, 2003 at 9:00 AM at the PMA Liaison Office, Camp General Aguinaldo, Quezon City. ICA and CCIE samples/specifications and bid documents as well as instructions to bidders will be presented during the conference. Opening of bids will be on December 19, 2003 at 13:00 PM.

For particulars, please contact the Secretariat BAC at PMA Procurement Office, Fort del Pilar, Baguio City (074-447-3886) PILTEL.

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(Contract No. ADB/OAS-2003/093)

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines invites interested companies to bid for the provision of Telecommunication Links to the Pacific Area (hereinafter called the "Services").

2. The Services require private and secured links, unattended operations (24x7) utilizing the state-of-the-art satellite and IP/VPN communications technology for connections between ADB (HQ) in Manila, Philippines and its offices in Papua New Guinea (PNRM), East Timor (SOTL), Fiji (SPSO), Vanuatu (SPRM) and Australia (PLCO). The Services must provide for a two-way satellite communications with a bandwidth of 512Kbps uplink/downlink between HQ and PNRM, SOTL, SPSO and SPRM and 512 Kpbs upstream/downstream between HQ and PLCO. The application for such communications system is for the transmission/reception of data at a minimum of 64Kbps, voice facility at 64Kbps and videoconferencing service at 384Kbps for each of the offices. All related devices and software between the HQ router and the remote offices' routers are part of the entire scope of service, including installation, maintenance and support of all devices and software.

3. Bidders must meet the following minimum requirements: (a) 5 years legal existence as validly registered company, (b) 5 years experience in the field of international telecoms network, (c) 3 satellite communication projects of international in nature, (d) US$400,000 annual revenue from telecoms services for the past 3 years, (e) partner of one global satellite network operator, (f) one certified satellite technical engineer stationed in the Asia-Pacific Region where its satellite network operations center (NOC) is located. Failure to meet any of the minimum requirements will lead to disqualification of the bidder and rejection of its bid.

4. The bidders may obtain one set of bid documents from the Contracts Section, General Services Division, Office of Administrative Services, Room 4219N, at the above address from **11-19 December 2003** (8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

5. A prebid conference will be held at 9:00 a.m. on 19 December 2003 at ADB's Conference Room (Rm 4522N), ADB Headquarters Building, 6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila to brief the bidders on the full scope of the Services and to answer queries from the bidders.

6. Bids should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Provision of Telecommunication Links to the Pacific Area," addressed to the attention of "Head Contracts Section, General Services Division, Office of Administrative Services," and should reach ADB not later than 10:00 a.m. on **6 January 2004.**

7. This invitation does not entail any commitment on the part of ADB, either financial or otherwise. Any cost of preparation of bid shall be borne solely by the bidder. The ADB reserves the right to accept or reject any bid.

(Sgd.) NORMIN S. PAKPAHAN
Chairman, Procurement Committee for Services
Office of Administrative Services

(PDI-Dec. 11, 2003)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar St. cor. Dr. J. Quintos St., Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-00-00; 526-01-00 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item/Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2003-288	5,120 bxs continuous forms	P 2,858,114.00	LBP Funds
2003-305	1 lot supply and delivery of CISCO ROUTERS (12 units CISCO 1750; 3 units CISCO 3725)	6,184,200.00	LBP Funds
2003-311	one (1) year lease rental of 35 units heavy duty copiers with collator	2,268,000.00	LBP Funds
2003-312	1 lot design, supply, delivery & installation/ commissioning of FM-200 fire detection & suppresion system	3,000,000.00	LBP Funds
2003-313	150 pcs IBM PCI multiprotocol adapter card	4,050,000.00	LBP Funds
	80 pcs LTO tape cartridge	200,000.00	LBP Funds
	600 pcs 3490E cartridge, Imation or equivalent	180,000.00	LBP Funds
2003-314	100 pcs secure currency cassettes (Universal IBM Part #75G6992)	2,250,000.00	LBP Funds
2003-317	6 units encoder machine	6,600,000.00	LBP Funds
2003-322	4 units electronic checks clearing system	4,400,000.00	LBP Funds

Eligible to participate in the bidding are (1) Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; (2) 60% Filipino owned Partnerships/Corporations; (3) Two (2) or more suppliers forming into a joint ventures jointly and severally liable; (4) Cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; (5) Suppliers with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget, and (6) Suppliers with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget.

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on **January 21, 2004** at 1:00 PM and the Bid documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M.H. del Pilar Street corner Dr. Quintos Street, Malate, Manila.

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on **January 9, 2004** at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LBP Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particular relative to the **Qualification/ Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract** shall be governed by the provisions of **RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.**

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantegeous to the Bank.

ANTONIO T. HERNANDEZ
SVP, Corporate Services & Subsidiaries Sector
Chairman, Committee on Bids and Awards

(PDI-Dec. 11 & 18, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

1898 - 1998
100
KALAYAAN

SEC ADVISORY RE:
NORTH EAST LUZON FOUNDATION, INC.

November 27, 2003

The Commission wishes to inform the public that NORTH EAST LUZON FOUNDATION, INC. (formerly CAGAYAN VALLEY FARMER WORKERS ASSOCIATION, INC.), with SEC Registration No. A199717282, is not authorized to grant loans.

The public is therefore strongly advised to take the necessary precautions before entering into loan transactions with the above named entity.

For guidance and information.

(PDI – December 11, 2003)

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National Power Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-MMSD 2003-010

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-MMSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements:

Schedule	Date/Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	PR No./Inquiry No.	ABC
I	Jan. 20, 2004 10:00 AM Kañao Rm	Mechanical Parts for Pulang Lupa DPP "CKD"	PB031203-MMVB9794 (PB2) HO-PUL-03-0082 HO-MAB-03-0019 SL-PDP-03-0023 HO-AUR-03-0020	16,754,620.00
II		Mechanical Parts for Romblon Diesel Power Plant "CKD"	SL-RDP-03-0032 SH030910-MMAD9451(PB)	3,882,836.00
III		Mechanical Parts for Dinagat DPP "CKD"	HO-DIN-03-0129/0130 PB040120-MMJP0179	1,326,908.00
IV	Jan. 20, 2004 2:00 PM Kañao Rm	Hauling of diesel fuel from designated origin to different NPC-SPUG plants for Luzon Operations	HO-LOD-03-0039 PB040120-MMMT0178	16,262,160.00

NOTE: A Pre-bidding Conference will be held for the following bidding schedules:

Schedule	Date	Time	Place
Schedule I, II, & III	January 6, 2004	2:00 PM	Kañao Function Room
Schedule IV	January 6, 2004	3:00 PM	Kañao Function Room

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Materials Management Services Division, Materials Management Dept., of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City with Tel. No. **9245357/9245477** upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP100.00 per schedule starting on **December 11, 2003.** No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, MMSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration/Accreditation issued by Former Genco Offices and PSD will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid.

Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of Republic Act No. 9184.

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit - One percent (1%), Bank Guarantee - One and a half percent (1.5%), Surety Bond - Two and a half percent (2.5%), penal and callable on demand issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
MMSD-NPC

(PDI - Dec. 11 & 18, 2003)

SEARCH FOR OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

Dr. Conrad Iñigo, President of the Philippine Council of Deans and Educators in Business (PCDEB), recently launched the First Annual Search for Outstanding Business Educators to recognize the exemplary contributions of educators the fields of accountancy, management, marketing, banking and finance and office administration. Awarding of the winners will be held during the 3rd National Convention of PCDEB on December 11, 2003 at Marriott Hotel, Cebu City. The board of judges was composed of House of Representatives Deputy Secretary General Ramon Ricardo A. Roque, CESO/Personnel Management Association of the Philippines President Ramon S. Medina, Department of Trade and Industry Executive Director Virgilio P. Fulgencio, Commission and High Education Director Amelia A. Biglete and Petron Foundation Executive Director Marilou G. Erni.

K.I.D.S^2 concert

THE SERAPHIM Choir, Ana Tirol and Marian Cabahug sing for the benefit of cancer and thalassemia stricken under a fund-raising project of K.I.D.S^2 (Kindness for Indigent, Deprived and Sick Kids) Foundation Inc. The concert entitled "In the Company of Angels" will be held at Teatro Aguinaldo, Camp Aguinaldo on Dec. 11, 2003 at 7 p.m. The repertoire is a combination of Religious, English, OPM, Reflective and Christmas songs.

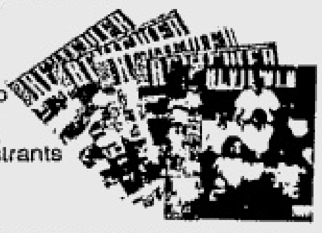
The Seraphim Choir is an all male 12-member group originally part of the Our Lady of Peace Parish Choir in Lipa City.

Marian Cabahug is the eldest child of Philippine tenor Nolyn Cabahug.

Ana Tirol was a representative of our country to the Asean Pop Festival.

The concert will also include a choir of some children with cancer from PGH and thalassemia from Fe Del Mundo Medical Center Foundation Inc.

For inquiries, please call Arcie at 750-74-92, Tess at 746-19-84 or 0917-823-3520.



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Salesman's Centre Cebu

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Event Details:
Date and Time **December 13, 2003 (8:30 am to 5:00 pm)**
Venue **Pollo Negro Café and Rotisserie, G/F Ponte Salcedo Bldg., 120 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati**

Hurry! Limited seats available.
To register you may contact:
A **Hinge Media, Incorporated** (look for Angie Tan)
Tel : (632) 753-47-74, (632) 753-35-97
Telefax: (632) 813-68-48
Address: 1705 Cityland Herrera Tower, 98 Herrera corner Valero Streets Salcedo Village, Makati City, 1227, Philippines

B **Salesman's Centre, Incorporated** (look for Nathan Garing)
Tel : 724-54-25 or 724-45-83
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Col. Marcelo S. Castillo (Ret.)

USNA in Annapolis Class 1938

Died in the grace of our Lord on December 7, 2003
at the age of 89 in Hockessin Del. USA.

Col. Castillo was predeceased by his wife **Carmen Salva** & son **Col. Marcelo Castillo III**.

His surviving daughters **Coralyn de Tagle, Marilyn Salapare & Jacquelyn Schilling** and in laws **Blet V. Castillo, Lito de Tagle, Cito Salapare & Stephen Schilling** and nephews, nieces, grandchildren and great grandson **Dale Daradal, Scott Price, Cathleen Price, Joseph Price, Luis de Tagle & Charlene Castillo & Marcelo Gustav Castillo** and brother **Col. Felicisimo Castillo** & sister **Encarnacion Lopez** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

Holy Masses will be held at **St. Mary of the Assumption in Hockessin, Del. at 11 a.m. on Dec. 11, 2003** and at the **Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City from Dec. 9 to 15, 2003 at 7:30 a.m.**

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."
John 3:16

Lovingly we remember

Our Beloved **Nanay**

Expedita Ebarle Tañada

On the day she joined
her Creator and husband Lorenzo
December 11, 2002.

Her children, children-in-law, grandchildren and
great grandchildren request relatives & friends to pray
for the eternal repose of her soul.

DEATH NOTICES

PEDRO M. COMPENDIO
Joined our Creator on December 9, 2003
at the age of 82.
His body lies in state at Compendio residence,
M.H. Del Pilar St., Liliw, Laguna.
Interment will be on Saturday, December 14, 2003.

OCTAVIO E. SAULO
Joined his Creator on Dec. 7, 2003
at the age of 69.
His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz,
Superior Chapel, Annex Bldg., Araneta Avenue,
Quezon City.
Interment will be on Sunday, December 14, 2003 at
Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park, Tandang Sora,
Quezon City.

ROSAURO BELTRAN CAJUCOM

BORN: MARCH 20, 1936
DIED: DECEMBER 8, 2003

We, his brothers, sisters and in-laws, Reynaldo and **Eugenia, Victor** and **Filomena, Ma. Luisa, Isabelita** and **Charito;** his nephews **Marius, Jonas, Ronald, Alfraiz** and **Mar, Robert** and his nieces request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at 102 Cajucom St., Bongabon, Nueva Ecija.

Vicente Almalel Garcia

Former City Assessor of San Juan, husband,
father, best friend, brother and uncle.

Born November 24, 1935 to
Marciano and **Catalina Garcia** in Biñan, Laguna

Passed away November 23, 2003 at
Glendale Memorial Hospital, Glendale, California,
after a long battle with heart disease.

In all, he was loved, admired and respected by all who knew him, and will be greatly missed. All family members and relatives were at his bedside when he passed away peacefully.

Survived by his beloved wife, soul mate, best friend, **Eny**, loving daughter and son-in-law, **Vicky** and **George (Matsuura)**, loving son and partner, **John** and **Robert (Smith)**, brothers **Ruding, Pat** and **Bebot**, sister **Violy** and sisters-in-law, **Lully, Cora** and **Achie**, and brother-in-law, **Fred (Pabalate)** and numerous nephews and nieces.

A memorial service was held at the Rose Hills Sky Rose Chapel last Saturday, November 29, 2003 at 3 pm, followed by the burial service at Rose Hills Cemetery in Whittler, California.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
Always caring... INQUIRER OBITUARIES
OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)
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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS · DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS · FREE OBIT DESIGN

CLASSIFIEDS

GMA launches Rolling store-Meralco refund tie up

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo launched yesterday the program "Sa Refunded Cash, May Gamot At Bigas" to help consumers avail of affordable rice and medicine using their Meralco bill refund at the Meralco office in Novaliches.

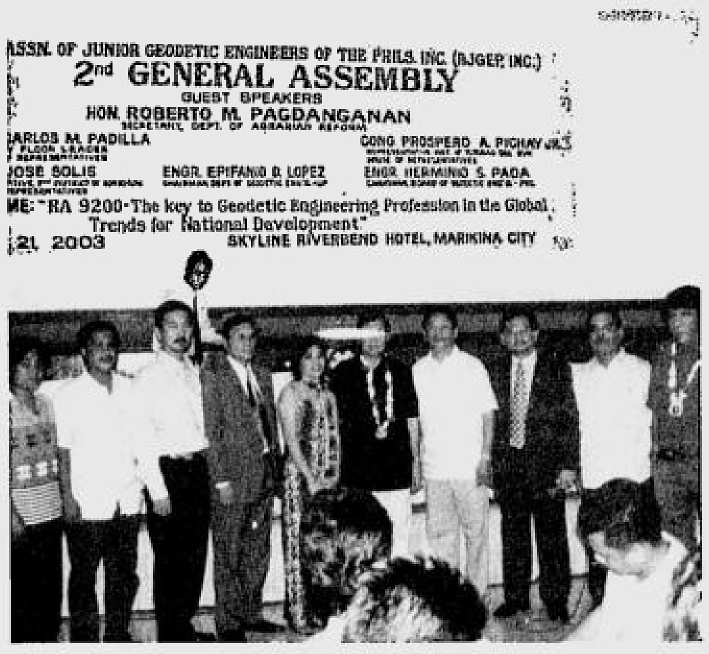
The program is being jointly implemented by the National Food Authority, Philippine International Trading Corporation, Manila Electric Company (Meralco), Department of Energy and the Department of Health.

Under the program, the NFA will be setting up rolling stores in Meralco branch offices to sell basic commodities such as rice, canned goods, cooking oil, coffee, sugar, noodles which are regularly being sold in the Tindahan ni Gloria Labandera Rolling stores and stationary outlets.

NFA rice is being sold at P16/kg and other basic food commodities will be sold at lower rates than the market prices in NFA rolling stores to make these goods accessible to Meralco customers and to maximize the utilization by the consumers of their refunded Meralco bill.

The PITC and the Department of Health, meanwhile shall also sell high quality medicines also at lower prices.

In support of the President's program, NFA Administrator Arthur C. Yap said the NFA has positioned rolling stores in 14 branch offices in Metro Manila.


ASSN. OF JUNIOR GEODETIC ENGINEERS OF THE PHILS. INC. (AJGEP, INC.)
2nd GENERAL ASSEMBLY
GUEST SPEAKERS
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CARLOS M. PADILLA
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SKYLINE RIVERBEND HOTEL, MARIKINA CITY

GEODETIC ENGINEERS ASSEMBLY:
Cong.Carlos M. Padilla, Minority Floor Leader of House of the Representatives was the guest speaker during the recent 2nd General Assembly of the Association of Junior Geodetic Engineers of the Philippines (AJGEP) held at Riverbend Hotel Marikina City. Shown from: Engrs. Cecilia Oliveros, Ronald Lomibao, Dante Joson, Alex Barcarse Chair-Mindanao, Jeanette Co, Vice Pres. Cong. Padilla, Eldred Tumbocon, Pres. Reynaldo A. Carpio Chairman Luzon, Frank Cale Past President & Dr. Anselmo Almazan.

aboitiz
ABOITIZ ONE
PLDT
CONTRACT SIGNING

ABOITIZ ONE, PLDT SIGN ACCORD
Aboitiz One, Inc. and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company entered into a strategic partnership by signing an exclusive one-year contract for the nationwide distribution requirements of PLDT. Shown during the signing held at the PLDT headquarters last July 25 are (seated from left) Assistant Vice President – Distribute & Save (D&S) Michelle Aboitiz, Aboitiz One CEO & President Sabin Aboitiz, PLDT Senior Vice-President Retail Group Claro Carmelo Ramirez, PLDT VP-Support Services Sector Atty. Carol Henson, (standing same order): Aboitiz D&S Account Executive Robert Humarang, Aboitiz D&S Sales Manager Allan Mina, Aboitiz COO Efren Uy, PLDT Company Wide-Conracts Division Head Atty. Maussie Sinense.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED COOPERATIVE BANK OF PANGASINAN

1. Starting December 11, 2003, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed Cooperative Bank of Pangasinan.
2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from December 11 to 19, 2003, to file claims for insured deposits.

   PDIC representatives are stationed at the premises of the closed bank on the above cited dates to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors during office hours, Monday to Friday.

   After the said dates, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Office from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., or by mail addressed to-

   The Manager
   Claims Processing Department
   Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
   2228 Chino Roces Avenue
   1231 Makati City
3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposits.
   b. Latest identification documents (ID) bearing the depositor's signature.

   Other documents maybe required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.
4. Pursuant to the provision of R.A. 3591, as amended, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Cooperative Bank of Pangasinan is on May 28, 2005. After May 28, 2005, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI–Dec. 10 & 11, 2003)

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS BUT ONCE.
JOB MARKET
Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Business

Petron, Shell bag Napocor supply deals

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NATIONAL Power Corp. has awarded oil giants Petron Corp. and Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. four supply contracts worth P632.4 million for the fuel needs of some of the power firm's oil-fired plants.

Data from Napocor's contract awards committee showed that the contracts represented a total of 57,181 kiloliters of industrial fuel oil.

The shipments are to be delivered to First Private Power Corp.'s 215-megawatt Bauang plant in La Union, Napocor's 98.8-MW Naga generators in Cebu, 100-MW plant in Zamboanga del Sur and the 32-MW Power Barge 104 based in Iloilo.

Petron bagged the contract for Bauang, P125.82 million; Zamboanga,P197.99 million, and the Power Barge, P73 .12 million.

Pilipinas Shell won the Naga contract worth P235.42 million.

Earlier this month, Petron was awarded two contracts worth P1.08 billion for the supply and delivery of 104,082 kiloliters of fuel to the 620-MW combined cycle power plant in Limay Bataan and the 108-MW Subic plant in Zambales for the remainder of the year.

GMA OKd 'open skies' for cargo in Subic, Clark

By Abigail L. Ho

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo last week signed an executive order enforcing an open-skies policy for cargoes in Subic Freeport and Clark Econonomic Zone.

Executive Order No. 253, signed on Dec. 3, covers the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport (DMIA) and the Subic Bay International Airport (SBIA).

Under the order, the development of the two gateways as major Asia-Pacific cargo hubs will be accelerated to prepare them for the entry of more cargo carriers from various countries, on top of major players Federal Express and United Parcel Service.

To facilitate this, the President ordered the Civil Aeronautics Board to process all applications for international air cargo transportation service to the DMIA and SBIA.

"Air access to the DMIA and SBIA is hereby declared as a development route. Hence, the authority to operate such route may be granted unilaterally without any restriction or limitation on capacity, type of aircraft and non-cabotage traffic rights other than those that may be required by considerations relating to airport security and aviation safety," the order said.

It further said that the new EO, as it would entail an increase in commercial air cargo access, would enhance trade and investment opportunities in the country.

Liberalizing air access in Subic and Clark would likewise provide Filipino exporters "adequate, efficient and reliable air links at competitive rates."

Foreign carriers that had already been given rights to operate cargo services in the two gateways could apply for a waiver of restrictions on capacity, aircraft type or non-cabotage traffic rights indicated on their respective countries' air service agreements with the Philippines.

Mila Abad, president of air rights liberalization advocacy group Freedom to Fly Coalition, had said earlier that the implementation of cargo open skies in Subic and Clark should be followed up by increased air access on the passenger side.

"As proven in Bali, increased air access has enabled an increase in air traffic and that encourages tourism, trade and investments. In China, Hainan has also been opened up and Shanghai is soon set to follow. We must have this liberalized air access also so that we will not be left behind," she said.

Stockholders infusing ₱3-B equity into PBCom

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE THREE major shareholders of Philippine Bank of Communications, in a meeting Tuesday night, had committed to infuse a fresh P3-billion equity into the bank before the end of the year, according to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

"They met (Tuesday night) and said a P3-billion infusion is forthcoming," said the BSP chief in an interview.

Buenaventura said the Filipino-Chinese community led by taipan Lucio Tan and the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce had been supporting PBCom.

Tan announced in late November that he would deposit P1 billion in the bank as a show of support. "I think he had made that P1 billion in deposit," according to the BSP chief.

Sources said the Filipino-Chinese businessmen were concerned that the problems of PBCom could "infect other middle-sized banks, especially those heavily involved in lending to Chinese merchants."

That, they said, was what had happened to PBCom and International Exchange Bank in April 2000 when Urban Bank Inc. declared a bank holiday. The two mid-sized banks were dragged into the vortex of panic withdrawals, prompting both to run to the BSP for emergency assistance.

"The biggest vote of confidence in PBCom would have to come from the shareholders and they can do that by infusing equity," said Buenaventura.

PNB aims to hit ₱200M in net profit next year

By Elena R. Torrijos

PHILIPPINE National Bank aims to post over P200 million in profit next year, higher than the expected profit of P150 million this year, on the back of further improvement in the bank's fee-based income and a reduction in its nonperforming loans by P16.3 billion.

"The budget for next year has yet to be approved by the board but we're targeting a 30-percent growth next year. Most of (the profit) will come from fee-based income. Our advantage really is that we have a lot of depositors," PNB president and chief executive officer Lorenzo Tan said in a press briefing yesterday.

Tan clarified that the bank posted a profit of P6 million in October—not a net loss of P44 million as earlier reported—and this brought the bank's profits in the first 10 months of the year to P133 million. The bank earlier reported a profit of P127 million in the first nine months of the year, a turnaround from a P1.52-billion net loss in the same period last year.

The bank has cited improved cost of funds due to a favorable deposit mix and better pricing of loans and deposits for its profit year-to-date.

Eastwood City
Walk

Taking You Higher and Higher this December

Get carried away with surprise after surprise at the Eastwood City Walk this December. From treasure troves of the best bargains to musical extravaganzas, from spectacular fireworks shows to an electrifying New Year's eve celebration, raise your spirits higher... and higher!

Christmas Concert at the Plaza

Fine dining takes on a truly holiday flavor as quartets play classic Christmas favorites nightly using a variety of instruments.

Dec. 9 Philmusica Woodwind Quartet
Dec. 10 Austruck String Quartet
Dec. 11 Philmusica Woodwind Quartet
Dec. 12 Octokanto Guitar Quartet
Dec. 13 Austruck String Quartet

Time: 7 pm to 9 pm
Venue: Central Plaza (Eastwood City Walk 1)

Weekend Fireworks Display

This December, weekends at Eastwood City will bring a spectacle on high. Gather your family and watch as the skies burst into glorious fountains of colors.

Date: All Fri. and Sat. of Dec.
Time: 10 pm

Serenades of the Season

Feel nostalgic as Voices and Eight of December take turns making the rounds of restaurants to sing carols of Christmas past and present. Watch for announcements of the choirs' schedule at the entrances of City Walk 1 and 2.

Date: Dec. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
Time: 7 pm to 9 pm

Symphony under the Stars

The 55-piece Manila Symphony Orchestra weaves holiday magic with an outdoor rendition of beloved Christmas hymns.

Date: Dec. 19 and 20
Time: 7 pm onwards
Venue: Central Plaza (Eastwood City Walk 1)

4-part Holiday Harmony

Chill out as the local music scene's most-wanted performers, **Paolo Santos, Jimmy Bondoc, Nyoy Volante** and **Nina,** gather in a rare one-night concert at the new City Walk 2.

Date: Dec. 20
Time: 8 pm onwards

Eastwood Christmas Bazaar

Fabulous gift ideas abound at the Eastwood Christmas Bazaar. From Dad's silk ties to Mom's coveted pendants, you're sure to find something for everybody!

Date: Dec. 11-17 (Batch 1)
Dec. 18-24 (Batch 2)
Time: 11 am to 12 mn
Venue: Eastwood City Walk 2

New Year's Eve Countdown

Give 2004 a high-adrenaline welcome amid live band music. Be there as the clock at the new Eastwood City Walk Clock Tower strikes the first minute of the new year.

Date: Dec. 31
Time: 9 pm onwards
Venue: Central Plaza (Eastwood City Walk 1)

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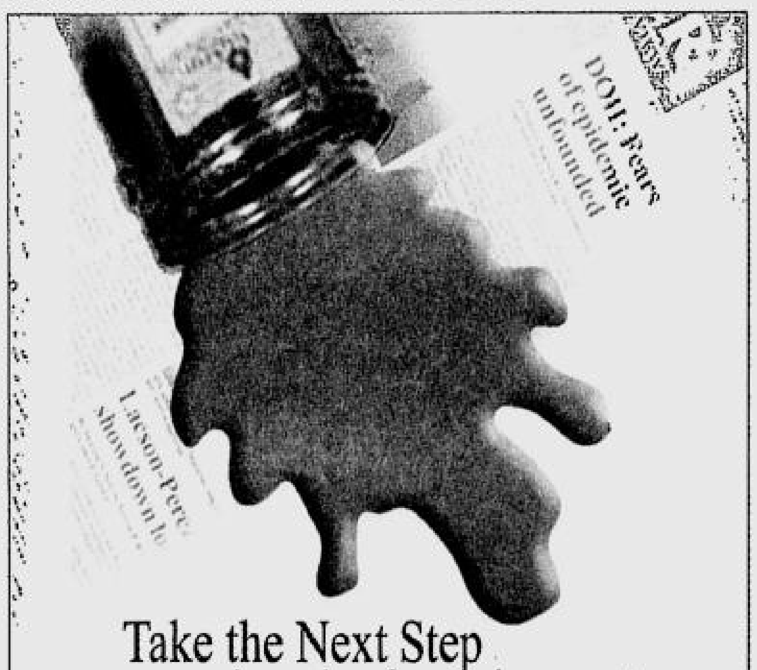

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Adrenaline-pumping rookies speed it out

By Tessa R. Salazar

PIA grabbed the second and third spots of the two final legs of the male-dominated race.

THE CHAMPIONSHIP leg for aspiring racers set up by the Tuason Racing School with the help from Ford Lynx ended with a blast on Nov. 29 and 30, in the 9th and 10th rounds.

Mixed emotions flavored the final stage of one of the high-profile novice racing events in the Philippines—culminating in a frenzied, jampacked crowd at the Batangas Racing Circuit, as seven racers came down the homestretch grappling to reach the checkered flag first.

Chicanes were removed so racers would be unhindered, experiencing the track in full. Colliding with chicanes would have meant a 20-second penalty.

7 competitors

Starting from 150 aspiring racers gathered from the search for the Top Driver Challenge in video races and go-karting competitions several months ago, the number was scaled down to seven. The surviving seven—Jan Jeff Borja, Edgar Quesada, Dominic Ochoa, Pia Boren, Dalia Guerrero, DJ Matt Yngson and Simon Gemayel—displayed their skill with speed at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

All in all, 10 races took place, all of them in the 2.8-km BRC, using production Ford Lynx 1600 units attached with safety cages, bucket seats and safety harnesses. There were eight laps per race.

Every race took about 20 minutes. At the end of 10 races, the highest pointers won the championship. Eventual TRS-Ford Lynx champion Jeff Borja earned 87 points, while Quesada—who fought fiercely during the final leg—followed with 74, displacing erstwhile drivers' champion second placer Dominic Ochoa, who finished third in round nine and second in round 10. Ochoa rounded out the series in third place with 70 points.

Boren, one of the two female finalists, grabbed the second and third spots of the two final legs of the male-dominated race. She was easily one of the crowd favorites, as the appreciative crowd cheered her on in her head-to-head with Quesada in round 9 and with Ochoa in round 10, while setting the fastest lap records in both races.

She placed fourth in the overall standings, scoring 56 as her parents, relatives, friends and supporters from Red Horse cheered her on. She hopes to move on to the Ford Lynx expert class, or to Formula Toyota.

The other woman driver, Dalia Guerrero, came in full force in round 10, charging past Borja for fourth place and held the champion at bay up to the checkered flag amid cheers from the crowd.

Guerrero finished fifth with 36 points. DJ Matt Yngson concluded his season with 31 points for sixth place and Simon Gemayel was seventh with 10 points.

Jeff Borja was the Top Driver Challenge winner in the video game challenge. He went on to go-karting and earned the scholarship of the TRS to compete at the TRS-Ford Lynx Cup. Egay is a go-kart enthusiast who attended the class and joined the race series. Pia is also a go-kart enthusiast and champion for two years who finally enrolled at the TRS and joined the race series.

Accessible for aspirants

The race has become accessible for aspirants with the help of numerous sponsors like Ford, Addict Mobile, Standard Insurance, Goodyear Tires, Ambi Pur Car Perfume, Red Horse Beer, Petron Ultron, Petron XCS Plus, MTV Philippines, Philippine Star, motorista.com.ph, trapik.com, Adidas and Fuji Films.

The Tuason Racing School is not just for racers but also for everyday drivers who wish to be educated on high-performance driving. "TRS teaches participants to handle vehicles at high speed without losing control," explains JP Tuason, TRS-Ford Lynx Cup chair.

Tuason also says there have been an increasing number of woman-driver students who aspire not to become racers but to learn how to drive high-performance engines.

The Tuason Racing School (TRS)-Ford Lynx Cup is also accessible at www.tuasonracing.com.

No nightmare, Nissan claims

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

REACTING to last week's column ("A Car Manufacturer's Worst Nightmare," Dec. 4) about the recall of millions of Nissan cars worldwide, Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. (NMPI) vice president Virgilio Diwa sent an e-mail stressing that there is absolutely no recall campaign for all models currently produced by NMPI. In other words, NMPI is not exactly having a nightmare.

This column last week focused on the announcement of Japan's Ministry of Land Transportation that Nissan Motor Co. would recall 2.5 million cars worldwide after receiving reports of engines stalling. The problem, which affects 25 Nissan passenger car models manufactured between April 1998 and May 2003, stems from the faulty soldering of engine sensors that can malfunction when heated, possibly causing the engine to halt while driving and then failing to restart.

Sentra and X-Trail

Answering this column's question whether any of the Nissan passenger cars sold in the Philippines are equipped with engines of the QG and QR series that Nissan Motor Ltd. (NML) Japan said are included in the recall, Mr. Diwa admitted that the Sentra 1.5 (DS) and Sentra 1.6 (Grandeur Superio, LS) are powered by the QG engine while the Nissan X-Trail has the QR-series engine.

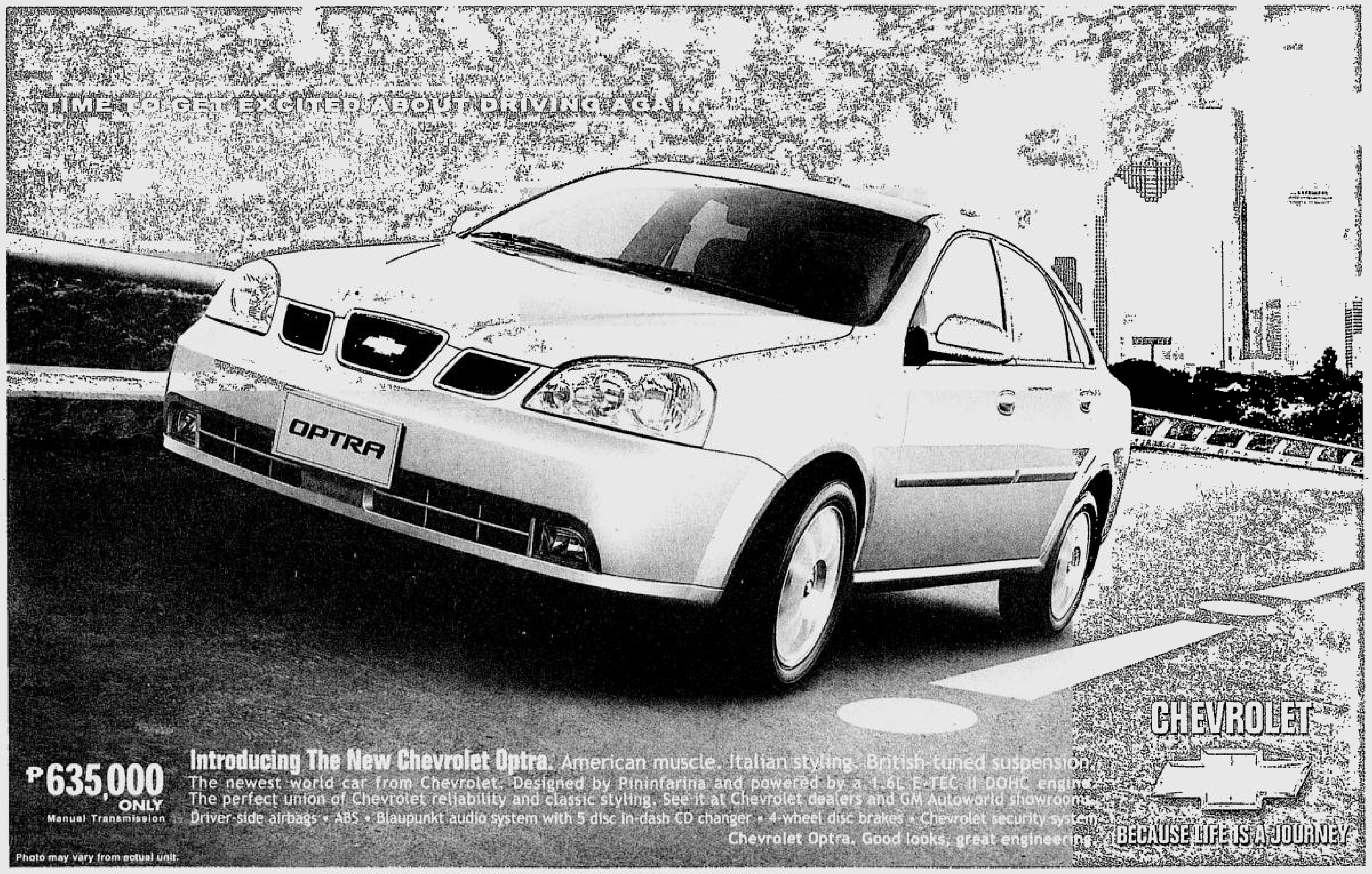
However, Mr. Diwa claimed that the car-based X-Trail compact sport utility vehicle recently launched here is not affected because local assembly of the vehicle started in June 2003, way beyond the production period covered in the official recall statement from NML. While NML has announced that the period covered by the worldwide recall is from April 1998 to May 2003, the period for some countries in the global overseas market including the Philippines is only from April 1998 up to July 2002, Mr. Diwa alleged.

350Z sports car

"The difference in the range of cars affected is due to the differences in production and new model changes from country to country," Mr. Diwa asserted. Thus, even though NML included the 350Z sports car in the worldwide recall, the 350Z being sold here is not affected because it was manufactured beyond the recall period, he said. Mr. Diwa did not mention what engine the 350Z is equipped with, whether it belongs to the VQ, VX or CR series that, along with the QG and QR series, are included in Nissan's worldwide recall.

Mr. Diwa conceded that some of the QG-equipped Sentras made in the Philippines between May 2001 and July 2002 may be affected although the recall announcement is limited to cars from certain production batches. He said NMPI has specifically identified which Sentras assembled and sold in this period are affected and has launched a "service campaign" whereby NMPI directly contacted Sentra owners whose vehicles may have the af-

NO NIGHTMARE/ C3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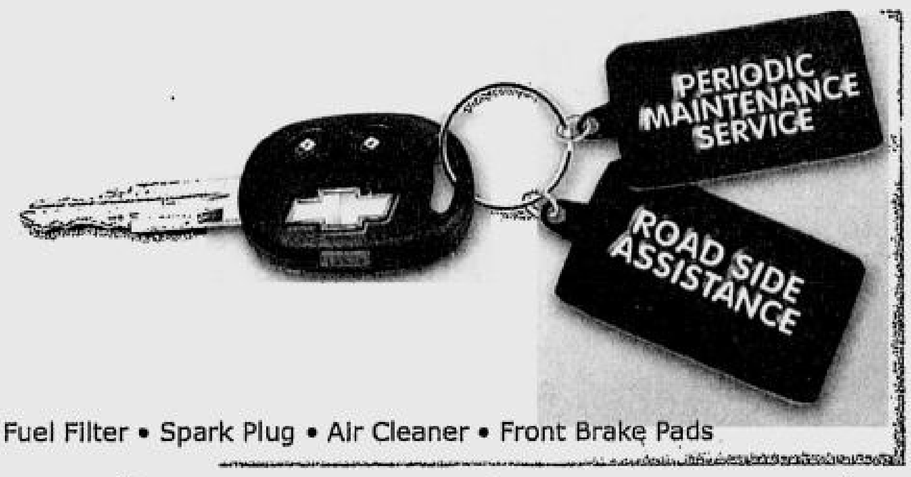


Isuzu ends fuel economy run with another record

E-DRIVE is about how well one can drive the Isuzu to use less fuel.

Text and photo
by Charles E. Buban

THIS time its an Isuzu pickup skippered by Michael and Patrick Gutierrez that set a new record in the recently concluded finals of the Isuzu Challenge E-Drive.

The duo posted the best fuel efficiency at 48.52 km per liter and broke the previous record of 47.46 in the Fuego category.

Because of their feat, they were awarded a bonus of P30,000 cash apart from the P20,000 cash and Samsung DVD players they already got for topping their category.

Other first-place winners (who also got P20,000 plus trophies per team) were Ray and Jhiegie Domingo in the Crosswind automatic category (25.8427 km/L), Ronald Jr. and Roy Aguto in the Crosswind manual category (35.16 km/L), and Oscar Nuke and Dave Aquino in the Trooper category (27.58 km/L).

119.6 km distance

This year's final run covered 119.6 km that stretched from The Fort in Taguig to Biga, Rosario, Batangas (via the South Luzon Expressway and Star Tollway).

"This year's final run has stressed once more that fuel efficiency of vehicles is increasingly becoming a major consideration not only for its buyers but for the automakers as well as brought about by the ever-increasing prices of petroleum products," said Myrna Gonzales, Isuzu Philippines senior manager for corporate affairs.

"Achieving high mileage—whether by developing efficient engine or by applying proper driving technique—is a responsibility that we must all take to help our country save on fuel and protect the environment."

Capping 3 earlier events

The finals of the E-Drive has brought together this year's winners in the three earlier events held in Cebu, Isabela and Manila.

"These four locations has indeed tested our Isuzu diesel engines to varied traffic and road conditions," reported Gonzales.

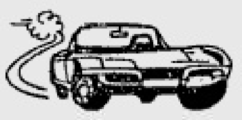
Just like in previous events, the E-Drive measures how much fuel is used for a specific distance. The less amount of fuel consumed would mean it is more fuel-efficient.

The fill-up and measurements were supervised by Shell gasoline personnel and validated by representatives from the Bonifacio Estate Services Corporation.

The final event was presented by Samsung while the fuel was supplied by Shell Diesoline Ultra. WG&A Super Ferry was the official carrier of the participants' vehicles from Cebu to Manila.

This Marcos is good; Toyota's giant move

FULL TANK



Al Mendoza

I WAS in Baguio City for more than a week last week to cover the 54th Fil-Am Golf Invitational and boy, oh boy, I can't help but admire the rehabilitation done on Marcos Highway. The expansion of the zigzag, the reinforcement of mountain walls with concrete and drainage pipes, and the flyovers, wow, they offer you breathtaking views of the mountains and lush greenery down below. This is not to mention the large detours properly marked that shorten travel time by precious minutes.

Easily, because of the much-improved Marcos Highway, travel time from Rosario, La Union, to Baguio, has been cut to almost an hour. In fact, I thought I was in a First World country—in Europe or America?

Who said everything that's got Marcos in it is bad in this country? Not the Marcos Highway, truly a world-class zigzag road.

* * *

Now we go to Kennon Road.

My dear friend, UP-Diliman literature Prof. Sol F. Juvida, has this rather cruel observation of this fabled zigzag, which was built by the Americans at the turn of the century to make Baguio City a reality. If you still don't know it, the Americans built the City of Pines as their R&R.

Said Sol FJ: "The Kennon Road is in such terrible shape that with just one sneeze, the mountain walls could crumble and come crushing down on you."

I guess that explains it. You want a safe journey going up Baguio City, take Marcos Highway.

* * *

Soon, when the expansion and rehabilitation of the Northern Luzon Expressway is completed, a closed-circuit television system to monitor accident-prone spots will be strategically posted along the 84-km stretch from Balintawak to Sta. Ines. The TVs will be monitored 24 hours a day for the easy deployment of emergency services.

This new feature will serve the public not only in times of emergency but more importantly, on the every day, efficient operation of the highway.

The number of vehicles passing through will be closely monitored with electronic sensors deployed in strategic points. Damage to the highway can therefore be anticipated long before an actual damage takes place and becomes a nuisance to motorists. Timely preventive maintenance can then be performed.

When completed, the new NLE will be at par with other expressways in the region and even around the world. Another eight months or so and the inconveniences will all be a thing of the past.

* * *

It will not be long when Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. will become the biggest Philippine automotive exporter of vehicle parts in the Asean region and the rest of the world.

As a giant move toward that, Toyota has recently announced the expansion of the Toyota Sta. Rosa Industrial Complex as a special economic zone. The signing ceremony for this monumental project saw the attendance of Toyota bigwig Akira Okabe, the managing director of Toyota Motor Corp.

Also in attendance were Nobuharo Tabata, president of Toyota Motor Philippines, and Antonio Abacan, vice chair of Toyota Motor Philippines.

* * *

I am not really surprised with this new move by Toyota. Asia's No. 1 carmaker for decades now has already established its foothold in the world automotive industry, what with its solid ranking as among the Top 5 in the universe.

In the recent Tokyo Motor Show where the latest vehicle technology has been unveiled anew by the world's superpowers in the industry, Toyota was the runaway choice as the best in innovation and ecology-friendly vehicles. Insofar as safety is concerned, Toyota emerged a frontrunner.

I saw two brand-new vehicles collide head-on by remote control at the Toyota manufacturing plant near the majestic, snow-capped Mt. Fuji. Easily, the two vehicles—a Prado and a Camry—were worth millions of pesos. In minutes, both vehicles were virtual total wrecks! Hundreds of journalists witnessed the occasion and almost all of them groaned. A fortune was spent—all in the name of discovering ways to make passengers safe during collisions.

"We will not think twice when it comes to the safety of our customers, no matter the costs," said Fujio Cho, president of Toyota Motor Corp. "At Toyota, we make our cars not only a joy to drive and fun to use but, more importantly, our cars are engineered for safety."

* * *

I never thought we have that many vintage cars in the country. I was at Rockwell Powerplant in Makati sometime ago and I saw a slew of well-restored cars—from '40s Mercedes Benzes to Studebakers and Packards. Rod Feliciano, the DHL top honcho who is also president of the National Golf Association of the Philippines, had a '50s Mustang and a '60s Mercedes sports car on display there. Boy, they were all in running condition. But here's the catch: A classic Benz, the one used in the era of Hitler's Nazi, was restored for nearly P2 million.

Speaking of vintage cars, the recent Mitsubishi Motor Show Camp featured classic Mitsubishi cars like the famous Lancer and Galant models from the '70s to the '90s. They all looked great. The show was such a big hit and so, Mel (Dizon), Froi (Dytianquin), Thelma (Lozano) and Arlan (Reyes), take a bow, please?

* * *

QUOTE ME. If there's one car you ought to buy as a gift for yourself or for your husband or wife this Christmas (depending on who controls the purse strings, of course), the Volvo S40 2.0 is the one. A stunningly fuel-efficient machine, this Volvo model—an engineering marvel I tell you for a low-budget price—would be a prized possession for anyone with a highly discriminating taste. You can even catch Albert Arcilla of Viking Cars in a good mood and who knows, he might give you the bargain of your life. It's Christmas, right?

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*Coincidental FX Taxi Radio Survey – Metro Manila
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DZMM 630	1	6.7%	8.3%
DZBB 594	2	3.9	4.9
DZRH 666	3	0.5	0.6

Hindi lamang sa mga tahanan ... pati sa mga lansangan,
DZMM ang inyong tinututukan, pinakikinggan at pinaniniwalaan.

No nightmare, Nissan claims

From page C1

fected part so that the part can be replaced without any condition and at no cost to the owner. "NMPI has taken very positive steps to address this issue," Mr. Diwa pointed out. "We are targeting 100 percent replacement of the sensor, defective or not in all vehicles at the soonest possible time."

Service or recall?

Doesn't NMPI's "service campaign"—contacting the owners of some locally assembled '01-'02 Sentras for 100 percent replacement of their engine sensors at the soonest possible time—sound very much like a recall campaign? You be the judge whether it sort of contradicts Mr. Diwa's declaration that there is absolutely no recall campaign for all Nissan models.

Nonetheless, Mr. Diwa was correct in observing that "Recalls have become commonplace for all car manufacturers. Surely the reports are more frightening than the reality." After all, even though Nissan Motor Co. is recalling 2.5 million cars all over the world, there have been no reports as yet of any accidents caused by the defective engine sensor.

What's more, as a former consumer activist I appreciate Mr. Diwa's conclusion that "What is important is that carmakers have responded quickly and favorably to recalls in the interest of protecting consumer welfare and safety."

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.

* * *

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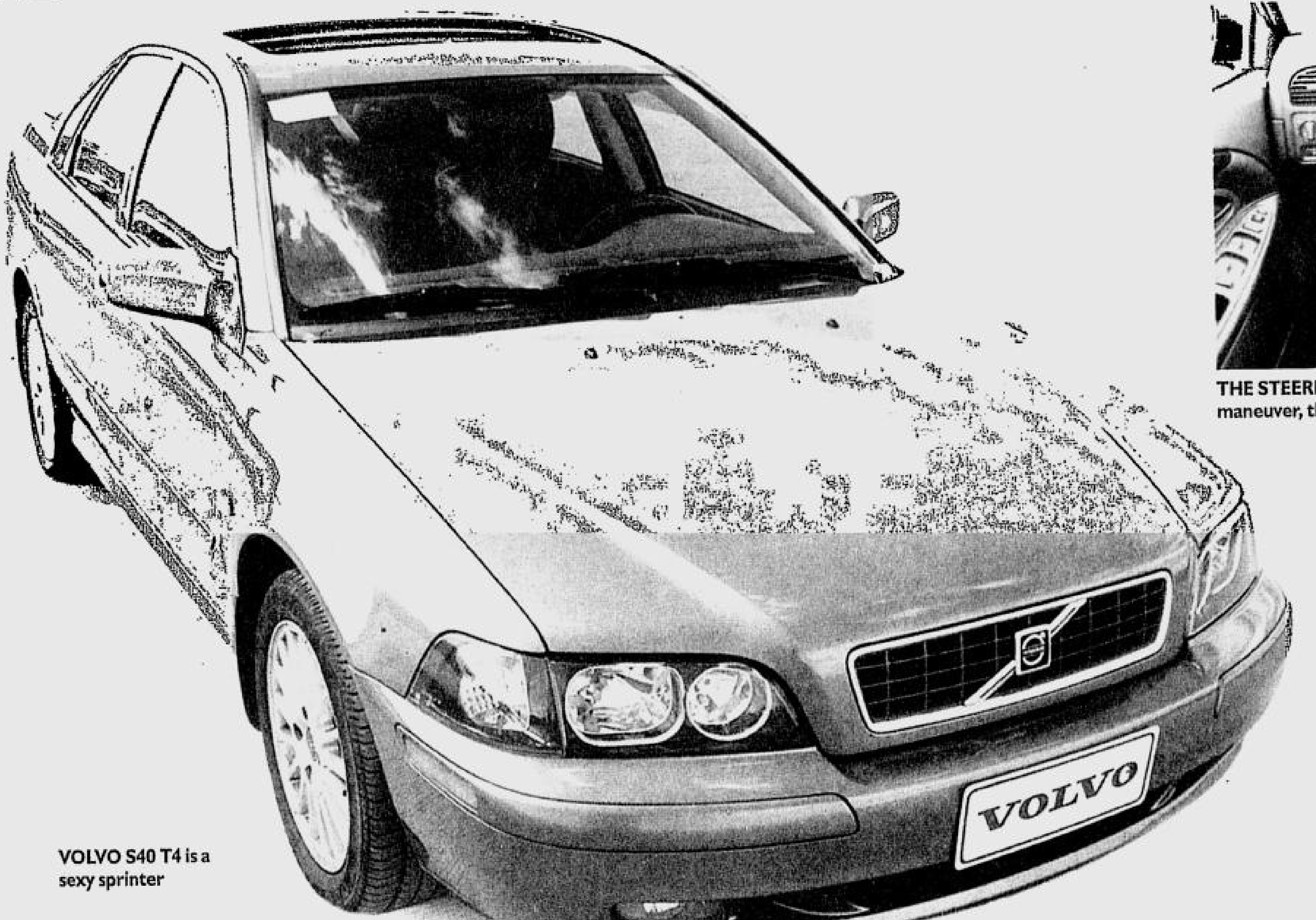


VOLVO S40 T4 is a sexy sprinter

THE STEERING is consistent. No matter how slow or fast the maneuver, the steering feels the same.

The safe and the furious

Text by Tessa R. Salazar
Photos by Alex P. Loinaz

THERE are cars for practical reasons, like those agile mid-size sedans you use for everyday driving in congested cities. Luxury cars, by their very reputation, are not practical cars. Their larger-than-usual proportions and prohibitive prices—at least double that of everyday cars—literally keep them a dream.

So, it has always been a certainty that a Volvo is not a practical car—until now, perhaps.

What has been touted as the safest car in the world is about to spring a surprise. Scandinavian marquee Volvo gave this writer a chance to take its smallest and cheapest Volvo S40 T4 for a spin. And oh boy, can it spin. The S40 T4 showed us brashly that an everyday automatic sedan could outaccelerate and outrun most manual transmission cars available in the market today.

As I drove like a proud Volvo owner around the metropolis for a few days, I realized how this sedan has the potential to break the age-old stereotypes hounding automatic cars. The Volvo S40 T4 is one straight thinking A/T with one thing in mind: to bring you from here to there in the shortest time possible, even if you don't put your foot down.

Elegantly sculpted metal

This 1,200-kg piece of elegantly sculpted metal runs on the power of 200 horses (compare that to normal 1,200-kg cars, which generate 150 to 170hp), and can add a few more kicks with its high pressure turbo to boot.

The two-liter, four-cylinder, 5-speed electronically controlled automatic transmission has a brief, negligible lag, but once the 200 horses are out of the starting gate, it does remind you of a bullet shooting out of the barrel. Floor it, and at 2,800 rpm onward the turbo does its job, and with an angry, likable roar, flings the car out like a slingshot. In a mere eight seconds, you have gone from complete rest to 100 kph, the G forces hugging you tight.

Once you discover this kind of power, expect your speed demons to come out from nowhere and whisper in every ear that you go faster and faster. If kidnappers were on your tail, they better forget it and try their evil motives on slower prey.

Innovative safety touches

Before the S40 T4, it has been a widely accepted fact that Volvo had invested so much in developing its engine and safety technologies, but not as much in the sporting looks department. The older Volvo cars were safe, yes, and had engines that could last forever, but their bodies were big, heavy and boxy. That has somewhat changed with the S40 T4. Yes, the innovative safety touches are all there, but the appearance of a sexy sprinter is an added bonus that we think is always welcome in this side of the world. Maybe this heralds a "reimaging" for Volvo itself.

> This is the curvaceous and cheapest Volvo that would make heads turn really fast

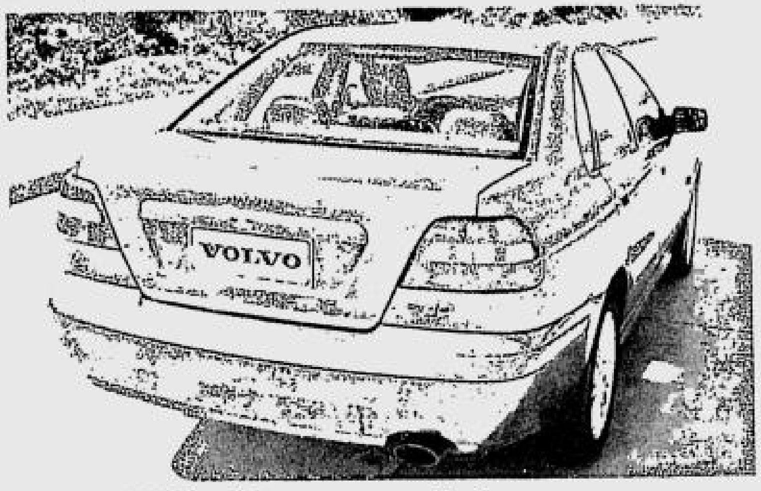
After describing all of the exciting driving capabilities of the S40 T4, one would ultimately have to ask, will Volvo's traditional markets go for it?

Taxi drivers would have just looooved this car, a car that I would have to say delight the *"singitero,"* those who devilishly seek and shriek rubber into every available road space during rush hour traffic just to get ahead. Well, judging from the worsening traffic in the Metro because of the unusually numerous road works ongoing simultaneously, Volvo's exasperated loyal customers might want to try being "offensive" drivers, for a change, so they can attend their business meetings on time.

The antilock brake system and electronic brake force distribution keeps the car stay focused and straight even during panic stops from high speed to complete stops.

Not ostentatious

While some Japanese-made car interiors tend to be too outlandish, the European touch, like the one in the S40, is not ostentatious. Conservative is the theme—like an antique furniture that really doesn't get out of style. The choice of colors for the S40 is also elegant. The dashboard doesn't look like a Christmas tree, and is simple and straightforward.



CURVACEOUS back deserves a second look

The steering is consistent. No matter how slow or fast the maneuver, the steering feels the same. The thumb rest makes it easier to point the car in the direction you want it. The headlight leveler lets you program how high or low you wish your headlight to illuminate.

There are fog lamps in front and at the rear.

A foot lamp is a thoughtful feature, and this really helps when you have to look for something you've dropped.

The child lock switch normally found on the side of the back passengers' doors is now conveniently located right at the console of the driver. You don't have to step out of the car to activate or deactivate the child lock.

Of course, a Volvo wouldn't be a Volvo without those nifty safety features. Given the potential speed and acceleration this car can achieve, the intelligent dual stage airbags, inflatable curtains for head and chest protection, side-impact protection system, and the whiplash protection system are well appreciated.

And if you happen to forget to fasten your seatbelt, or be unwilling to do so, a distinctive ticking sound will continuously remind you that your life is on a timebomb countdown while you remain unfastened.

The wide angled outer rear-view mirror eliminates the blind spots. Likewise notable are the massive pillars, which must be part of Volvo's safety feature.

The thick pillars could be one reason Volvo is developing transparent pillars.

Quite roomy

For its size, the Volvo S40's leg, elbow and headroom is quite roomy. This car was definitely designed with compactness in mind, sans the claustrophobic sensation. A power-glass moonroof adds a feeling of spaciousness.

The instrumentation switches are typical European, of course, and just like compact cars, all gauges are within reach and easy to understand. The small push buttons, though, for the side-view mirrors for instance, might pose a challenge for people with big hands or thick fingers. The cubbyhole at the center front is also just big enough for CDs.

The suspension gives a positive ride—firm but not stiff—typical for Swedish cars. This car actually rides well on Philippine road conditions, unlike other European cars, which have been observed to have a rough and bumpy time negotiating our potholes.

Verdict: P1.7 million may seem like a lot for one little metal. You can buy two cars with that amount. But that P1.7 million is what you pay for Volvo's technology and safety—those most important features in a car that make you arrive alive. So, if you look at it that way, P1.7 million is actually cheap. And besides, that P1.7 million can also make you think twice about driving the S40 so recklessly, so by itself the price tag is a "speed limiter." For those who want to buy an entry-level Volvo with a punch, this is it: the cheapest, smallest, most curvaceous Volvo that would make heads turn fast, really fast.

All for the love of Ford classics

By Charles E. Buban

THEY share an uncommon passion for cars but only to a generation of Ford classics that have become an icon in Europe: the Ford Escorts, Capris and Cortina.

These cars became famous in the '60s and up the '80s and came out in various models.

For the group that calls themselves Sacre Bleu Auto Club, these cars bring back memories in so many different ways.

"We thought there should be a venue for enthusiasts of these classics, after all, how many of these fine automobiles are still running our streets right now? We want to know and so this club, named after a French interjection, was born," related Butch Dua, founder and adviser of Sacre Bleu.

Get-together

Sacre Bleu started out as a mere get-together of a handful of car enthusiasts who don't even belong to a same profession or age group.

"I drive a 1979 Ford Escort RS2000 and whenever I see one or its other models (and that includes the Capris and the Cortinas), I try to get in touch with the owner and hope that he joins our club," Dua said.

"As long as you have that love for these practical European cars—the Ford's Escort Mks (I and II), Capri, Cortina, Granada, models produced in the '80s and before that—you're always welcome to join our club," informed Dua.

THE FORD Escort is a European icon that has won numerous rallyes.

Forum for members

Right now Sacre Bleu serves as a forum for its members regarding parts sourcing, body and engine original equipment specs, engine modification, and do-it-yourself tips.

But that will change, according to Dua who intends the club to provide its members in the near future basic automotive services like towing, do-it-yourself shops, our own parts clearing house and even an automotive library.

Just as before, the members still meet every Wednesday at the Beanhoppers Coffeeshop in Sgt. Esguera Avenue (formerly Bohol Avenue) at around 9 a.m. and see their members grow little by little.

"It's really fun seeing new faces and admire their undying love for their classic machines. We learn from each other," he said.

British icon

It was inevitable that most of the club members drive a Ford Escort. This British icon was the most successful rally car in the world.

FORD classics: oldies but always goodies

In 1968 the newly launched 1.6-liter Escort Twin Cam kicked off a 30-year winning spree—winning the Circuit of Ireland, Dutch Tulip, Austrian Alpine, Acropolis and Scottish rallyes—all within eight weeks.

By the end of its season, the Escort had also won the famous 1,000 lakes rally in Finland, which helped Ford secure the World Rally Championship for models.

Ford Escorts won anew the World Championship in 1969.

"Ford Escorts of all types, competing at all levels, were successful rally winners up to the turn of the century, and even today are still occasionally winning events all over the world," Dua shared.

Formidable machine

A new style Escort, the 1.8 RS1800 emerged in 1975, and its first victory came that year at the RAC rally, when the Escort took its fourth straight win.

Ford retained the RAC trophy in the following year 1976.

Drivers used Escorts to win hundreds of events at the world, European and national championship level. The Ford Escort was also unbeaten in the British Rally Championship for eight consecutive years, from 1971 to 1978.

"When those original Escorts first appeared, Ford already knew they have in their possession fine rally cars and this was proven after high profile victories in the world's most important rallyes," Dua added.

In fact 25 of these models' counterparts were paraded last Saturday during the Ford motorcade held at Fort Bonifacio Global City grounds as part of Ford's 100 years celebration here in the country.

And don't worry, these fine classics will again be parading in the upcoming Sexy Cars in the City event to be held at Rockwell grounds in Makati City.

LIFESTYLE

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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'ANG PASKO NATIN' CONTEST

P10,000 worth of Noche Buena goodies for top winner

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Do you have a holiday tradition? Share it with us and our readers for a chance to win terrific prizes

HOW do you celebrate Christmas year after year? What Yuletide traditions do you hold dear to your heart and practice to this day, whether as a family or as an individual?

Write us an essay about your Christmas traditions in 3,000 characters or less (not more than 400 words). Is it a family ritual that has been handed down from generation to generation? Or something that you've taken on as a personal statement? Is it an all-out happy celebration? Or a more circumspect way of observing a religious feast? Tell us why you think what you do around Christmastime is special. Include your name, age, address, phone numbers (landline and/or mobile).

E-mail to lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph. (subject: Ang Pasko Natin contest).

Or fax to 8974793, attention Lifestyle: Ang Pasko Natin contest. Please fax just once. An entry faxed more than once will automatically be disqualified.

Or send by post to PDI, P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office, 1263 Makati City, attention Lifestyle: Ang Pasko Natin contest.

Or hand-deliver to the PDI office on Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City, attention Lifestyle: Ang Pasko Natin contest.

Deadline for submission is midnight of Dec. 16. A photograph of your family Christmas tradition will increase your chances of winning.

The first prize winner gets to shop for *noche buena* worth P10,000 at Rustan's Supermarket. The second prize is an overnight stay in a deluxe room at the Westin Philippine Plaza and dinner for a family of six at Cafe Plaza's longest buffet. The third prize is P3,000 worth of call cards.

Winning entries will be published in this section.

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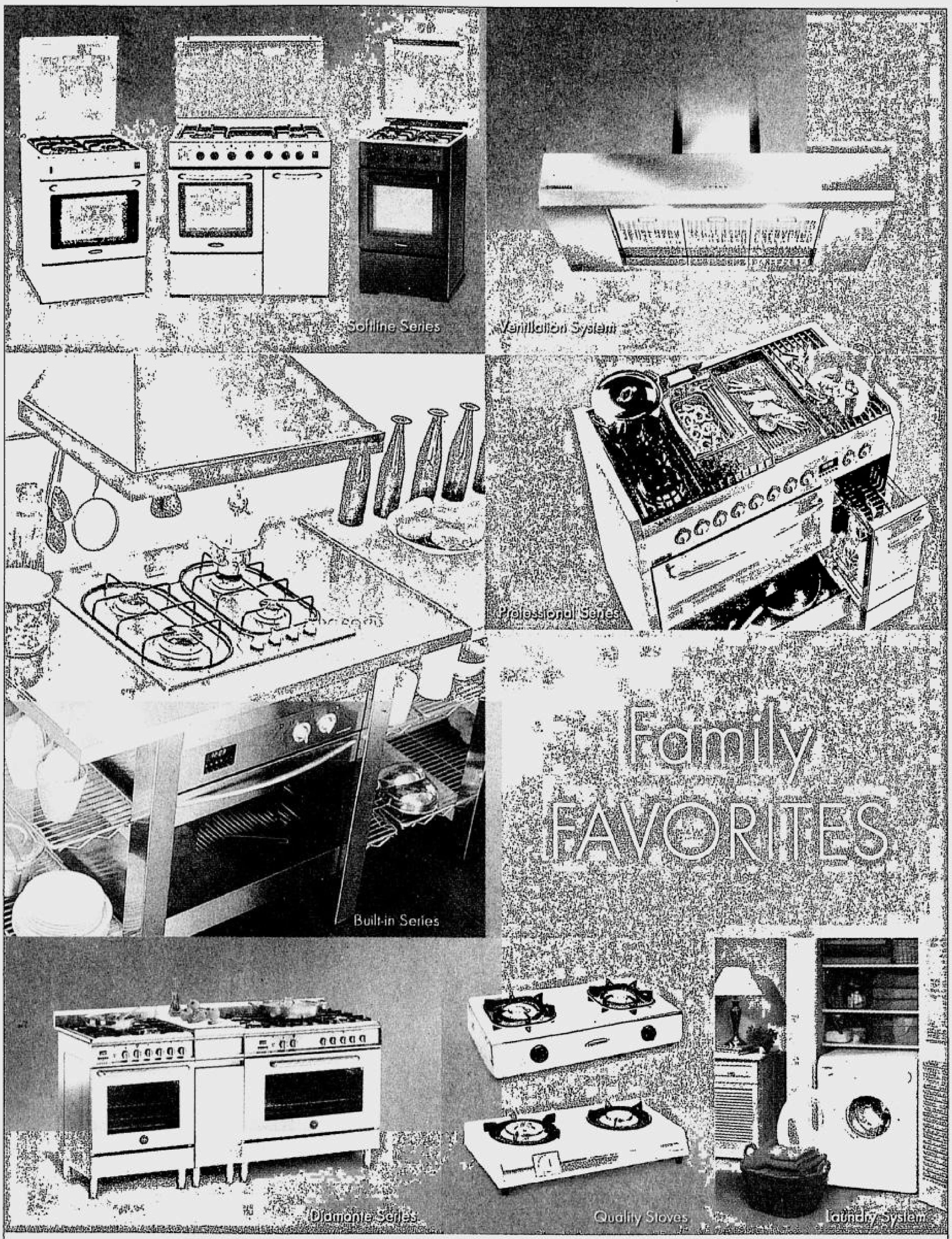
DECEMBER 11 THURSDAY



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Cakes and credit cards go together

WHETHER big or small, successfully managing any business is no walk in the park. This holds true for a bakeshop like Art Cakes, which caters to a discriminating clientele who demand only the best when it comes to quality, service and detail.

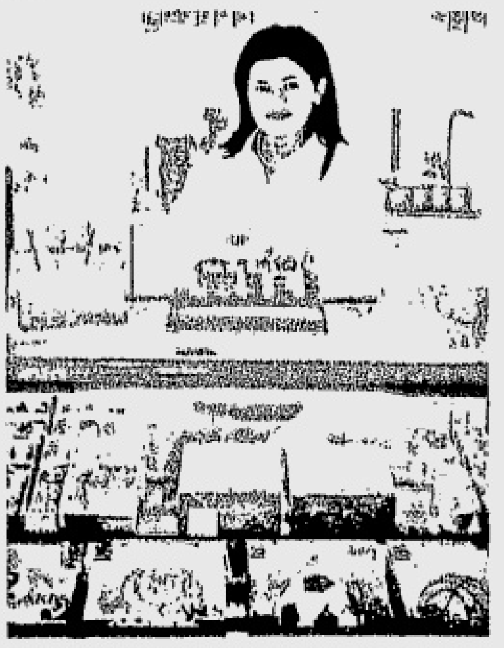
"We specialize in made-to-order cakes and pastries. Every order features a different design and we make every effort to please the customer and meet their requests. From the start, that's what we wanted to be known for—the place to go to for customized cakes," says Art Cakes proprietress Leilani Sy.

When it comes to designing cakes, Leilani welcomes and even encourages her clients to share their inputs. "Some clients bring their own designs while some ask us to research over the Internet for ideas, some of which can be very challenging," she says.

Some 50,000 cakes and pastries later, Art Cakes continues to attract customers who want to make an occasion more special with Leilani's creations. Aside from its branch in Wilson St. on San Juan, the shop has grown and can now be seen in major shopping centers including Shangri-La Plaza, Glorietta and SM North Edsa. Two more shops are scheduled to open south of the metro sometime soon.

Apart from customized cakes, Leilani's other best-selling products include mini chocolate cupcakes, cookies, and pastry gift boxes which contain an assortment of treats and other goodies. Like any skilled entrepreneur, Leilani is very hands-on when it comes to running Art Cakes. And helping her manage her finances is her Citibank Gold MasterCard.

"Using my Citibank credit card is very convenient, especially when I'm in the mall and I get an urgent call from my staff about needing extra supplies. It could be that the mixer bogged down so we need a new one, and that's not cheap. Good thing my Citibank credit card can cover all those business expenses," says Leilani.


BUSINESS is a "piece of cake" for Art Cakes owner and Citibank PayLite user Leilani Sy.

To help her budget, Leilani uses the PayLite Installment Plan, a built-in feature of Citibank credit cards that lets cardholders pay for big ticket items like furniture, appliances, jewelry, electronic gadgets, gym memberships and even school tuition in longer and lighter terms of three, six, nine, 12, 18 and 24 months at affordable add-on interest rates.

"PayLite is so handy, especially since it lets me effectively manage my cash flow. With PayLite, I don't have to fork out huge sums of cash in one purchase. It leaves me free to use cash for other items," says Leilani.

With Leilaini's sharp business acumen, dedication, professionalism and her Citibank credit card, it's only a matter of time before Art Cakes becomes as ubiquitous as its famous and beautifully crafted cakes and pastries.

CINNABON
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APPLES IN YOUR CINNAMON ROLLS
Cinnabon, makers of World Famous Cinnamon rolls, introduces Applebon. Made of 100-percent Washington apples infused with legendary Makara cinnamon on top of exquisitely soft rolls, the Applebon is served at Cinnabon bakeries within 30 minutes from the oven.
Until Dec. 31, Applebon is reasonably priced at P90 and comes with your choice of Iced Tea, Lemonade, Cafe Americano, Cafe Latte, Cafe Mocha, or Cappuccino. There's a Cinnabon bakery in almost every major mall in Manila and at selected Shell stations.

New award-winning Italian wines

ONCE again, Cellar & Cellar, Inc., the only company in the Philippines that specializes in fine Italian wines, has expanded its line of products with 16 new wines from four of Italy's most renowned wineries.

From Tuscany, the Fattoria dei Barbi in Montalcino winery produces Brunello di Montalcino 1998, a gold medalist in the World Wine Championships; Morellino di Scansano 2000, a full-bodied red Tuscan wine; Brusco dei Barbi 2002, rated a Best Buy by the wine specialist publication Wine Spectator with a score of 93/100; and Rosso dei Barbi 2002, an I.G.T. red that received an Oscar of the Wines Best Value awardee at the Oscar dei Vini ceremonies.

From the Veneto region, the multi-awarded winery Allegrini produces these wine lovers' treasures: Palazzo delle Torre 2002, a smooth, full-bodied cru, rated 92/100 points in Wine Spectator's Top 100 in the World for the year 2002; Bardolino Corte Giara Pagus 2002, a young red wine of exceptional character; Valpolicella Corte Giara Pagus 2002, a fruity, medium-bodied red best drunk young; and Soave Corte Giara Pagus 2002, a white wine with an appealing aroma, a delicate palate and a very refined finish.

Another winery that has earned high ratings from the Wine Spectator, Gambero Rosso, Guida dei Vini Italiani L.M. and other publications is Cielo in Montorso Vicentino.

With 3,000 hectares of vineyards, it is the biggest winery in Italy. Its latest acquisition is an estate in the Apulia region that produces the famous Primitivo: Primitivo 2002, an all-dinner red wine that is a marvelous accompaniment to roasts and piquant cheeses; and Chardonnay 2002, a rich and delicious white wine with the intense aroma of apples, caramel and pineapples.

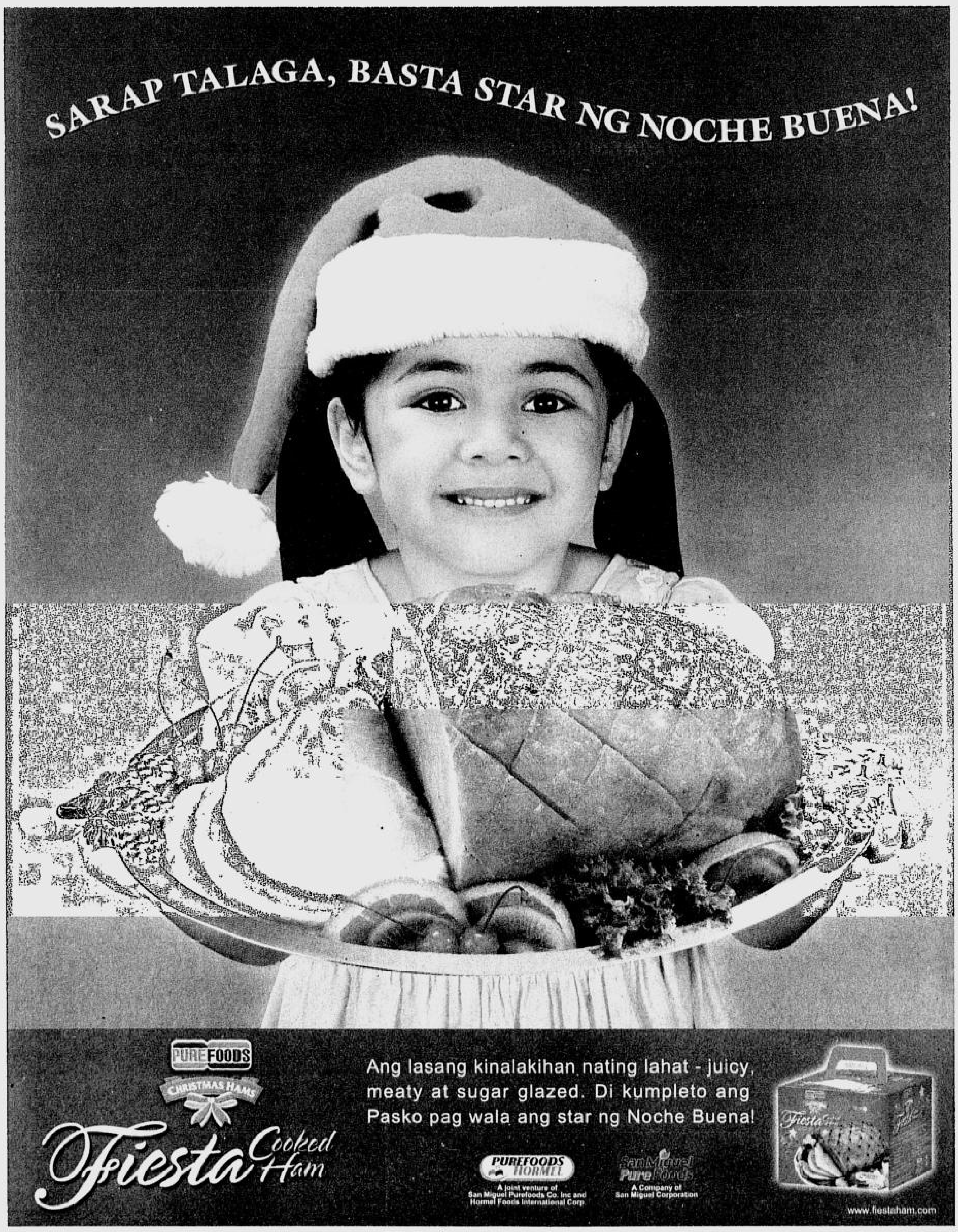
The Abruzzo region boasts of Vinicola Bove's Roggio Antico Trebbiano d'Abruzzo 2002, a pleasantly dry white wine made from Trebbiano and Chardonnay grapes that is a perfect match for Mediterranean dishes.

Enoteca Bacco Montepulciano D'Abruzzo 2001 is Cellar & Cellar's flagship and most saleable wine. Its label bears the logo of Cellar & Cellar's founder and chairman, Pasquale Binetti, a sure guarantee of top quality.

Two wineries in the Apulia region share award-winning selections. The Botromagno winery produces Primitivo 2002, an Oscar of the Wines Best Value awardee. Gravina 2002, also an Oscar of the Wines Best Value awardee, is a delightful white wine that has a floral and fruity bouquet with an underlying hint of almond.

The Conti Zecca winery, in turn, produces Donna Marzia Red 2001, a red wine made from Negroamaro, Sangiovese, Malvasia and Montepulciano grapes which is also a Best Value winner. Donna Marzia White 2002, on the other hand, is a white wine made from Malvasia bianca and Bombino bianco grapes—perfect as an apéritif and as an accompaniment to pastas and seafood in general.

Cellar and Cellar, founded in the Philippines in 1998 by Italian wine maker and sommelier Pasquale Binetti, imports and distributes about 70 top-quality wines. Call 6330033 and 6383803 or visit Unit 101 G/F Residencia 8888 Condominium, Amethyst Drive corner Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig.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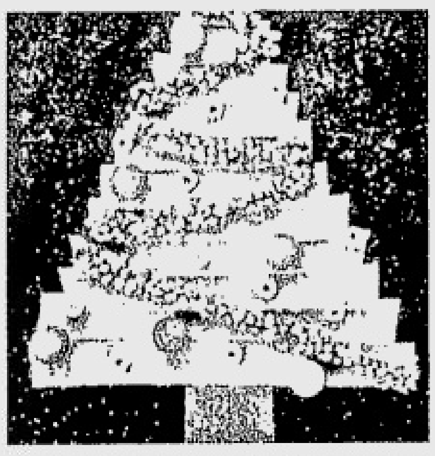
MARIO'S Restaurant offers free lechon de leche for every Christmas party booked in the resto.

Book a party and get exciting freebies

LOOKING for a place to spend your Christmas party? Every party you book with Mario's Restaurant where the specialty is Filipino-Spanish cuisine comes with a complimentary roasted pig (*lechon de leche*).

As you enjoy the holiday celebration, Mario's also provides photo coverage with your party booking. Valued party bookers also get free hotel gift certificates with breakfast buffet for two plus spa gift certificates. And regardless of the size of booking, a party booker gets to avail of a gift certificate equivalent to 10 percent of the size of the booking.

There are limited function rooms available for December. For reservations and inquiries, call 7239893 or 0920-9207521.



CANDIES FOR THE HOLIDAYS
Candy canes, truffles, caramels and fudge—what would Christmas be without candies? The one place to get creatively made candies is Candy Corner, the candy authority in the country. Newly introduced candy-toy combinations, candies in tubes, jawbreakers and many other varieties are available. For a Candy Corner outlet nearest you, call 6327741/6719184 or visit www.candycorner.com.ph.

Stews are perfect for the cold weather

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

WITH the cold nights ahead, a serving of stew with toasted bread or freshly cooked rice would be the ideal comfort food. It is very filling, saucy and flavorful. Here we have beef stew, *pata* and beans and *caldereta* perfect for weekend parties or for the coming holidays.

All-American Beef Stew

½ c corn oil
¼ c minced garlic
1 c chopped onions
500 g beef *kenchi* or *batok*
1 bay leaf (laurel)
½ c tomato paste
6 c water
2 c cubed carrots
2 c cubed potatoes
2 c string beans, sliced into 2-inch lengths
salt and pepper to taste
1 pc beef broth cube
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
2 tbsp all-purpose flour
dispersed in ½ c of cooking liquid

Heat oil in a stockpot. Pour in the garlic and onions and sauté until the onions are limp. Add the beef and the laurel and continue to sauté until the beef changes color. Pour in the tomato paste and 6 cups of water. Allow to boil and then simmer until the beef is tender. This will take about 2 ½ hours to 3 hours or pressure-cook for 20 minutes. Remove beef from pot and set aside. If using a pressure cooker, release the pressure before opening.

Pour in the carrots and allow to boil for 10 minutes. Then add the potatoes. Boil for 5 minutes. Add the green beans, season with salt and pepper. Add the beef cube, Worcestershire sauce, flour dispersed in ½ cup of the cooking liquid and the beef. Simmer for another 5 minutes. Adjust seasonings if necessary.

Spanish Pata and Beans

1 pc pork *pata*
100 g white kidney beans
¼ c olive oil or corn oil
¼ c butter
¼ c minced garlic
1 c chopped onions
1 c diced red or green bell peppers
1 pc bay leaf (laurel)
1 can *chorizo de* Bilbao sliced diagonally
½ c tomato paste
¼ c rum or brandy
3 c pork broth
1 pc pork broth cube
2 tsp Spanish paprika (pimenton)
salt and pepper to taste
2 tbsp dark brown sugar
chili sauce to taste
¼ c grated parmesan cheese (optional)

Half-fill a stock pot with water. Boil and add *pata*. Allow to boil for 5 minutes. Turn off the heat. Drain and boil a fresh pot of water. Add the *pata*, boil and simmer until tender. Slice into bite-sized pieces. Discard the bones.

Soak the white beans in a generous amount of water overnight. Drain. Half-fill a large saucepan with water. Add the beans and boil until tender. Drain.

Heat olive oil and butter in a stockpot. Add garlic, onions, bell pepper, bay leaf and *chorizo*. Sauté until the onions are limp. Add the cooked *pata* and beans. Sauté briefly and then pour in the rest of the ingredients. Allow to boil and then simmer for 20 minutes to allow flavors to develop. Adjust seasonings if necessary.

Beef Caldereta

500 g beef *batok* or *kenchi*, cubed
¼ c cherry brandy or dark rum
2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp minced garlic
½ tsp coarsely ground black pepper
¼ c olive oil
2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp minced garlic
1 c chopped onions
237 g can tomato sauce
1 ¾ c water
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
approx. addtl. 4 ½ c water
1 ½ c cubed potatoes
1 c cubed carrots
1 sprig fresh, or 1 tbsp dried, rosemary leaves
1 c cubed bell pepper
½ c canned button mushrooms, sliced
½ c sliced pitted black olives
½ c frozen green peas
¼ c grated parmesan cheese
chili sauce to taste
salt and pepper to taste
1 tsp Spanish paprika (pimenton)
237 g can tomato sauce

Marinate the beef in cherry brandy, soy sauce, garlic and black pepper. Let stand for at least 30 minutes. Drain and reserve marinade for later use.

Heat the olive oil and butter in a large wok or stockpot. Sauté the garlic and the onions. Add the beef and continue to sauté until it changes color. Pour in the reserved marinade, 1 can of tomato sauce and the Worcestershire sauce. Allow to boil and then simmer until the beef is tender. Add water as necessary, ½ cup at a time.

While waiting for the beef to tenderize, boil the potatoes in lightly salted water until tender. Drain and set aside. Boil the carrots as well to desired tenderness. Set aside.

As soon as the beef is tender add the following ingredients—rosemary leaves, bell pepper, canned mushrooms, olives, frozen peas, cheese, chili sauce, salt, paprika and the remaining tomato sauce. Allow to cook for 5 minutes more. Then add the boiled carrots and potatoes. Add water if necessary to correct the thickness of the sauce.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking, baking and cake decorating classes at Dorothy's Cooking School in Quezon City. Call 7217735 or e-mail dorothycookingschool@yahoo.com.

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner

MONDAY

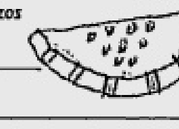
Cereal and milk Steamed *embotido* *Pandesal* Butter and cheese Coffee or fruit juice	Chicken curry Rice Fruit salad	Clear soup Tossed greens with thousand island dressing All American Beef Stew Rice Bananas ala mode

TUESDAY

Corned beef omelet Loaf bread Cheddar cheese Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea	*Ampalaya* salad *Paksiw na plapla* Rice Bread pudding	Spaghetti Garlic bread Mocha ice cream with coffee jelly

WEDNESDAY

Rice Canned sardines sauteed in oil and onions Coffee or hot chocolate Fresh pineapple	Chicken *adobo* with fried garlic topping *Gisadong sayote* Rice *Garbanzos*	Baked *tahong* Spanish *pata* and beans Rice Watermelon wedges

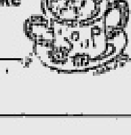


THURSDAY

Oatmeal Ham and cheese sandwich Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea Bananas with cottage cheese	*Pancit lomi* *Quekiam* or fried *siomai* Fruit cocktail with ice	Sweet and sour fish Steamed *bokchoy* with oyster sauce Rice Fresh fruit platter

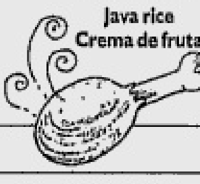
FRIDAY

Hotcake with butter and maple syrup Chicken hotdog Coffee, hot chocolate or fresh fruit juice	Breaded porkchops Buttered string beans Rice Banana cupcake	Chicken *tinola* Rice *Mais con hielo*



SATURDAY

Garlic rice Vigan *longganiza* Fried eggs Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea Papaya with calamansi	Taco salad Roast chicken Java rice Crema de fruta	Salad bar Beef *caldereta* Fried fish fillet with tartar sauce Rice Food for the gods



SUNDAY

Arroz caldo Coffee or iced tea Fresh fruit platter	Grilled chicken, squid, catfish and pork *liempo* Fresh vegetable *lumpia* Red eggs and tomato salad Rice Assorted *kakanin*	*Pesang isda* *Adobong* Chinese *kangkong* Rice Canned peaches with crushed ice

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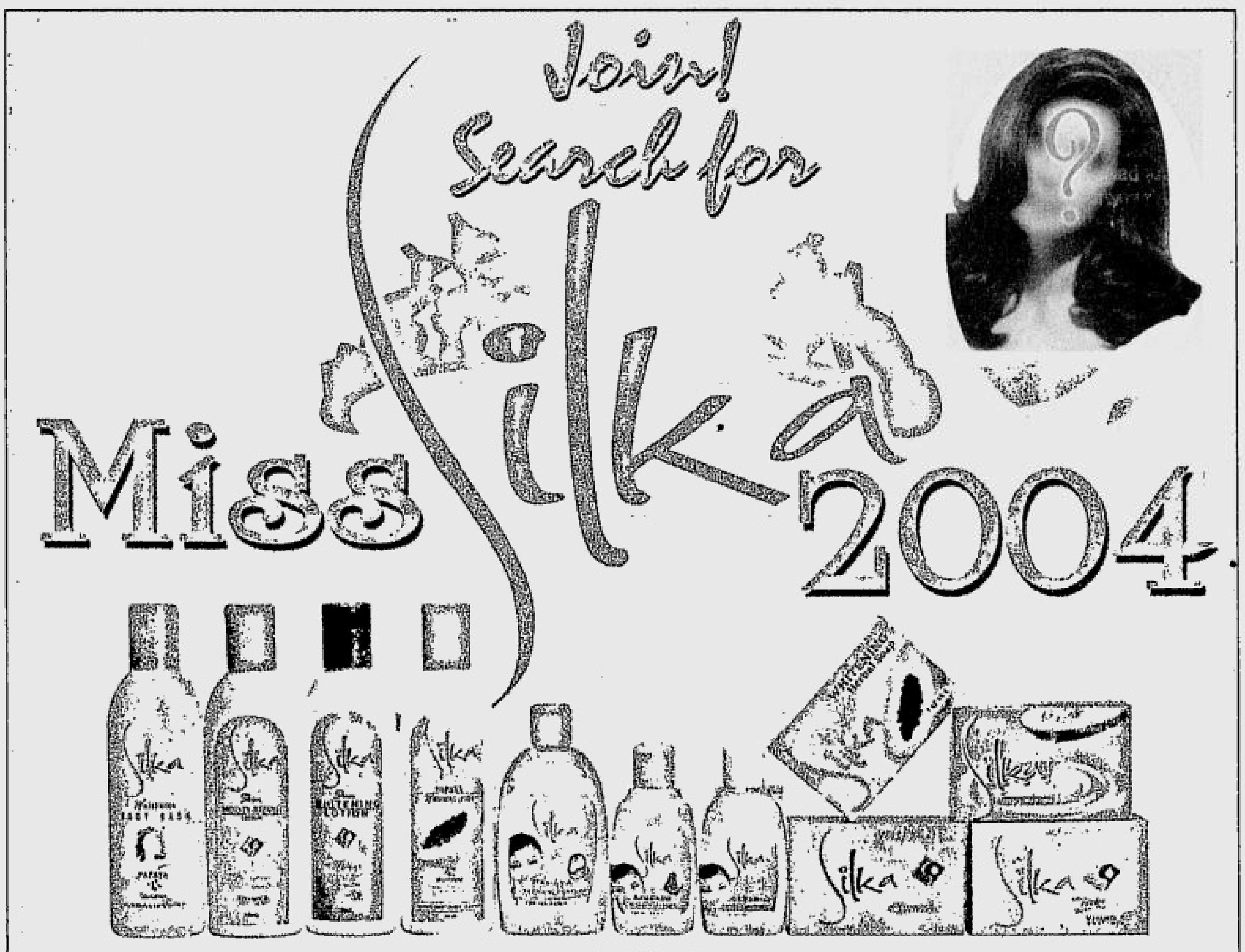

MECHANICS:
1. All natural born females residing in the Philippines between 18 - 24 years old meeting the criteria below are invited to join the search for Miss Silka 2004:
   - ⊙ fair complexion
   - ⊙ at least 5'3" in height
   - ⊙ with pleasing personality of good moral character
   - ⊙ College level or College graduate

*PROMO STARTS DECEMBER 1, 2003 UNTIL MARCH 31, 2004

2. Entries have to be mailed with the following requirements enclosed:
   - ⊙ one (1) label or empty box carton of any Silka product
   - ⊙ Bio-data including name, address, contact number and signature
   - ⊙ Vital statistics including height and weight
   - ⊙ 3R size close-up colored picture
   - ⊙ 4R size full-body colored picture
3. Entries have to be mailed to the following address:
   Search for Miss Silka 2004
   c/o PBS ADVERTISING
   Dolmar Building, 1122 Perez Street,
   cor. U.N. Avenue, Paco Manila
4. Selection Process:
   - ⊙ There will be four (4) qualification rounds held before the day of Miss Silka 2004 Pageant.
   - ⊙ For each qualification round, twenty (20) candidates will be interviewed. Three (3) will be chosen as finalists for each round – for a total of twelve (12) finalists to compete for the title of Miss Silka 2004 on the day of the pageant.
   - ⊙ Selected candidates and finalists will be notified through registered mail. For those residing in remote areas of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, 2-way transportation fare and 1 night hotel accommodation will be provided for the participant and 1 companion.

Schedule of Events:

Event	Event Date	Last Day for Entry Submission
Qualification round # 1	January 10, 2004	December 31, 2003
Qualification round # 2	February 7, 2004	January 31, 2004
Qualification round # 3	March 6, 2004	February 29, 2004
Qualification round # 4	April 3, 2004	March 31, 2004
Miss Silka Pageant 2004	April 24, 2004	

*Only one entry per participant will be acknowledged throughout the duration of the search.
*All Silka employees, distributors, retailers and advertising agencies, including their relatives up to the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity are excluded.

5. Awards:
   Miss Silka 2004 winner
   - ▪ Php 50,000
   - ▪ one (1) year exclusive contract with Cosmetique Asia, promoting all Silka products through mall tours, TV guesting and other PR activities
   - ▪ an exclusive date with TV Star and Silka Endorser John Lloyd Cruz

1st runner up
- ▪ Php 35,000
- ▪ Silka gift pack

2nd runner up
- ▪ Php 25,000
- ▪ Silka gift pack

12 finalists chosen during the elimination rounds
- ▪ Php 5,000
- ▪ Silka gift pack

Candidates interviewed
- ▪ Silka gift pack

PER DOH-BFAD Permit #1041 s. 2003

Alternatives for people who can't drink milk

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

UNTIL we got this interesting letter from a reader (e-mail address ach13boy@yahoo.com), we hardly knew about the condition called lactose intolerance (or, in layman's terms, inability to process milk), which we were told is common among Filipinos. But before going into a nutritionist-dietitian's explanation of lactose intolerance, here's the reader's letter:

"I am lactose intolerant, which means I cannot eat dairy products and that goes, too, for margarine, peanut butter and mayonnaise. But I love to eat out. My trouble is that nobody in the restaurants and fast-food establishments would tell me the ingredients of the food they serve. I have tried inquiring through their e-mail addresses but they don't respond. I've asked Jollibee about their peach mango pie, gravy, hotdogs, spaghetti sauce; McDonald's for the gravy, chicken Mcdo's breading, apple pie, spaghetti sauce; KFC for the gravy, spaghetti sauce; and Dunkin Donut and Mister Donut for the ingredients in their dough and donut filling.

"I noticed that if you didn't bother to read labels of popular meat products in the groceries, you'd think they didn't contain dairy ingredients. They do have skimmed milk. But lots of other processed food items don't even have a list of ingredients on their packages. So how do we, lactose-intolerant consumers, know if these products are good or bad for us? I just want to be heard so my problem can be addressed."

Here's helpful information from Celeste Tanchoco, a nutritionist-dietician at the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (tel. 8372071 to 82, local 2288):

"Lactose intolerance is a condition among people whose body does not produce enough of the enzyme needed to digest carbohydrate in milk. There are two kinds: adult lactose intolerance and primary (in children) lactose intolerance. Children with the condition suffer from diarrhea and bloating of stomach when given milk. Adults develop lactose intolerance when they don't drink milk for a long time. The more common symptom is loose bowel movement."

Tanchoco suggests the following: shift to dairy milk alternatives like soya-based drink and non-dairy milk-based products. Adults can get over their lactose intolerance by gradual re-introduction of milk and dairy products in their diet.

The nutrition-dietician advised our letter sender to consult members of the Society of Pediatric Gastro-Enterologists and Nutritionists. Unfortunately, she didn't have the contact numbers when we interviewed her.

More letters

Rolando B. Sinense of Moonwalk, Parañaque, advises airline passengers to reconfirm their booking with the airline itself, particularly if the ticket is bought from an agent. Here's what happened at the airport last year to his 83-year-old, sickly aunt:

"My aunt was to join my nieces and nephews on the flight from Manila to Roxas City. She had a confirmed ticket that was bought earlier from an authorized PAL travel agent in SM Southmall, Las Piñas. When the group checked in at 4 a.m. on the day of departure, however, my aunt was the only one whose name was not on the list of confirmed passengers. Despite the group's protest, she was not allowed to board the plane. She was able to fly next day on her own, but she had to be fetched on arrival and accompanied to our home in Roxas City, which was 70 kilometers from the airport."

PAL's customer service had one reply to all the complaints sent by Sinense. "Sorry about the mix-up, but it was the agent's fault for not coordinating with us." It was the same answer we got when we asked at a PAL counter in the airport.

Another scam victim

Warn your household help about cellphone scams. Jenny Ong writes: "Our *yaya* received a text message announcing that she had won P2-million in a raffle. The message included a name and cell phone number she should call for more details. She was informed that the raffle was held in Australia and she had only seven days to claim her prize. The requirement was to present a valid I.D. and a bank account number."

The full text was: "Congratulations! The last Nov. 14, 2003, 7 digit of ur Cell. No. had won P2 million Handog Regalong Pamasko Central Bank! Call me now… (sic)" (Name and telephone number of texter was given)

As expected, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas denied that there was such a raffle.

Charges for phone inquiry

Edd Cosme of Sucat, Parañaque, wrote: "I didn't know that there was a P3 charge if you inquired from PLDT about telephone numbers. None of the operators at PLDT's information number 187 will tell you that there are charges for your inquiry. I only knew about it when I got my latest bill. It's unfair for subscribers who are not able to get copies of the telephone directory at the designated redemption places."

A spokesperson of PLDT explained to us that subscribers had been sufficiently informed about the new charges for telephone number inquiry before it took effect last October. There's a uniform charge of P3 per inquiry.

Jenny_pagalilauan @yahoo.com wrote, "I just loaded P500 worth of phone card in my cell phone and then immediately checked my balance. It reflected a P5 deduction. Is this the charge for account-balance-inquiry? Why didn't Globe inform subscribers about it?"

Globe denied that there were charges for account balance inquiry.

Website for consumers

From Fred Castro and Arnel (mc_2@trisys.com): "A Pinoy consumer discussion forum is up and running now! Share knowledge and experiences (either good or bad) among consumers about gadgets, cell phones, restos, books, mp3s, movies, etc. I hope you will find this discussion forum helpful. The main objective of having a consumer discussion forum is to share knowledge and information among consumers regarding consumer welfare."

Here are the links: http://www.pinoyconsumers.knows.it and http://s2.invisionfree.com/Pinoy_Consumers/Index.php

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph

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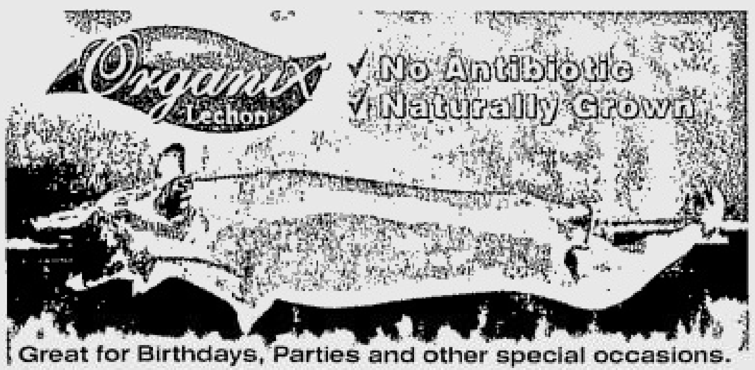

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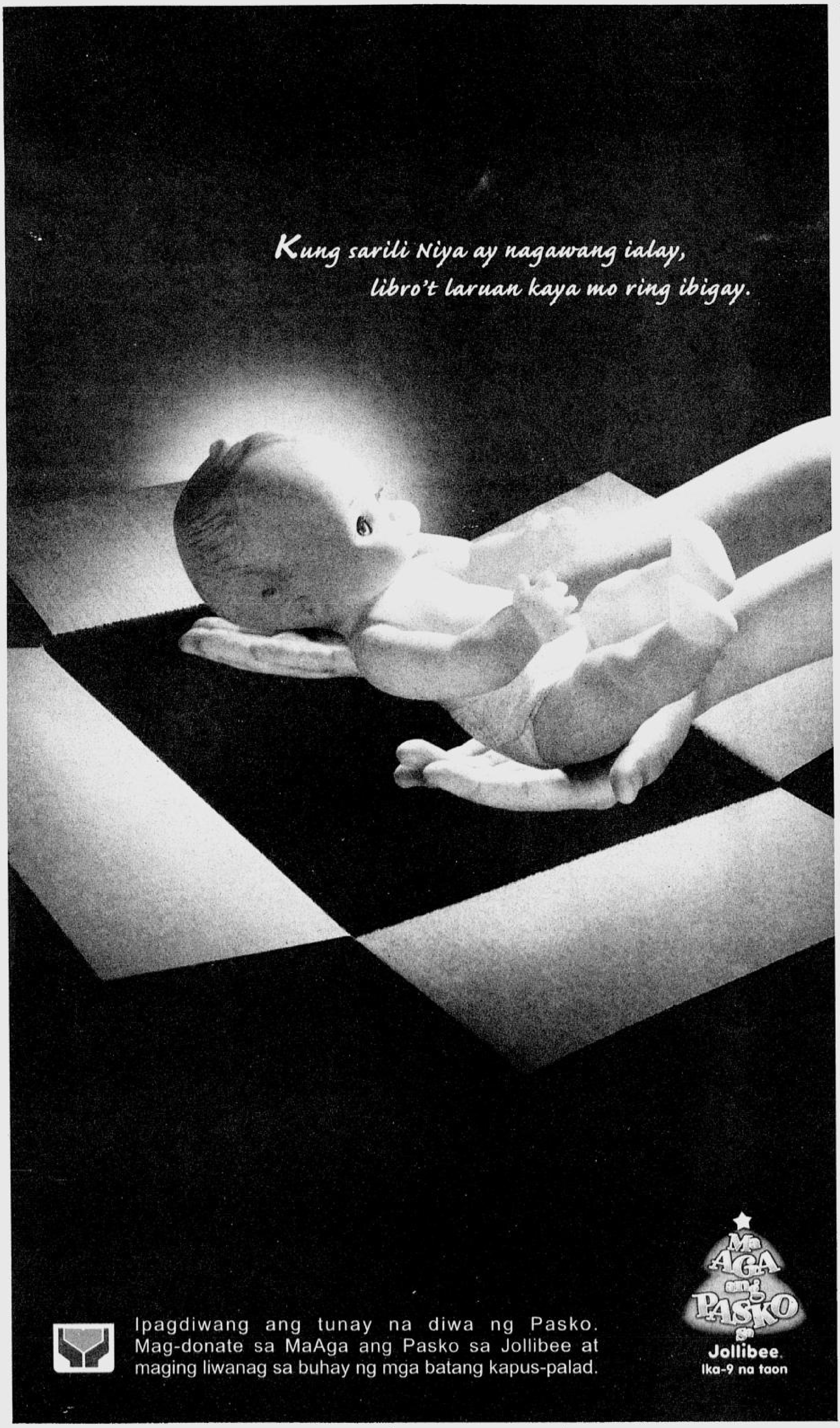
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LIFESTYLE

CAFÉ Plaza's fresh oysters served on a bed of ice

Hotel dining to your heart's content

Text by Jasmine W. Payo
Photos by Rudy Esperas

It's not one long table laden with food, but you can hop from one restaurant to the next at the Westin for your dining pleasure —at one price

IF your family has ignored the traditional queso de bola and honey-glazed ham on your Noche Buena table these past few Christmases, maybe it's time to rethink this year's holiday feast.

But if whipping up new dishes will only leave you frazzled, dining out is always an option. Luckily, restaurants and hotels usually come up with their finest banquets and best deals during this season.

Like most top hotels, The Westin Philippine Plaza has come up with its special Christmas and New Year offerings. And this year, Westin is enticing diners with a buffet special. Buffets are nothing new, of course. Cabalen has been prospering with its all-you-can-eat Kapampangan buffet all these years. And Triple V has been raking it in with its extended buffet that includes Japanese dishes from Saisaki, Western choices from Dad's and Filipino favorites from Kamayan. But it's the first time a pricey hotel is offering a gustatory sweep of this magnitude.

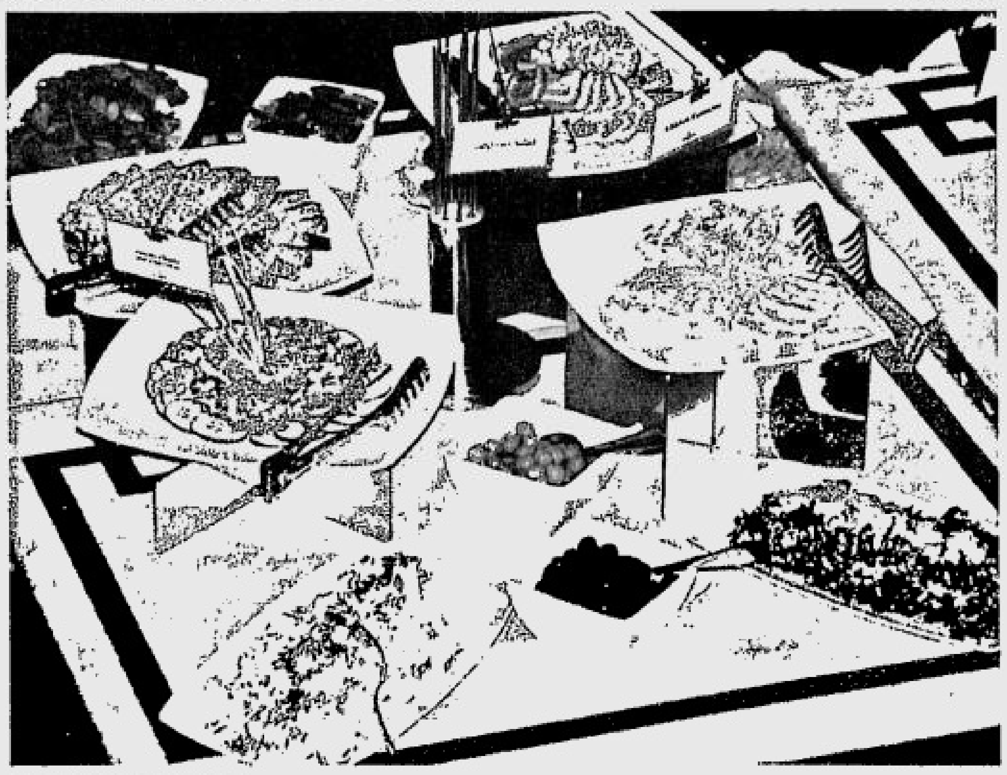
'Longest' buffet

For several months now, diners have been trooping to Westin for its "Longest Buffet" every Thursday and Saturday. At only P788+, guests can hop from one buffet set-up to another. They can choose from the Italian cuisine offered in Alfiere, the Cantonese dishes served in China Sea or the international specialties in Café Plaza. In addition, there's a drink-all-you-can juice bar which serves iced tea, lemonade and pink lemonade.

"People have this notion that it's expensive here at Westin and they're afraid to try out the restaurants. But this buffet allows guests to try all three restaurants at an affordable price," says Alfiere supervisor Ronnie Rocaverte.

So instead of concocting a new dish for your Christmas dinner, why not celebrate with a buffet treat for the family by having fresh oysters, hummus, roasted Angus beef and Fookien noodles?

HOTEL/ E2



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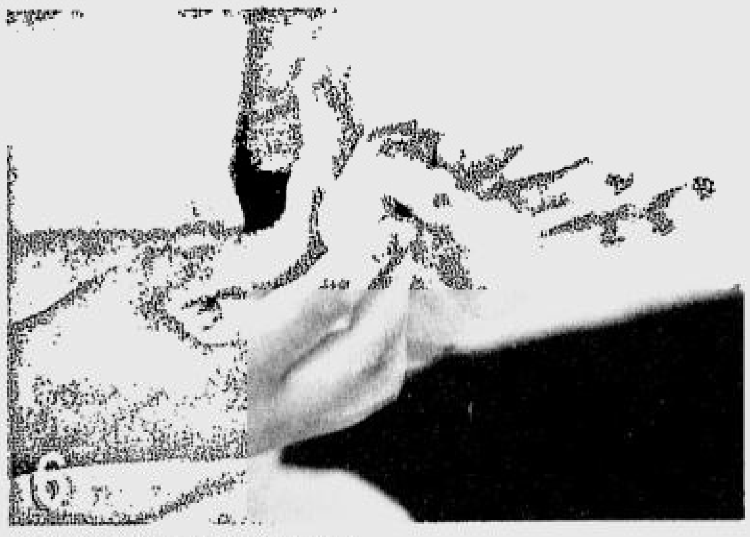
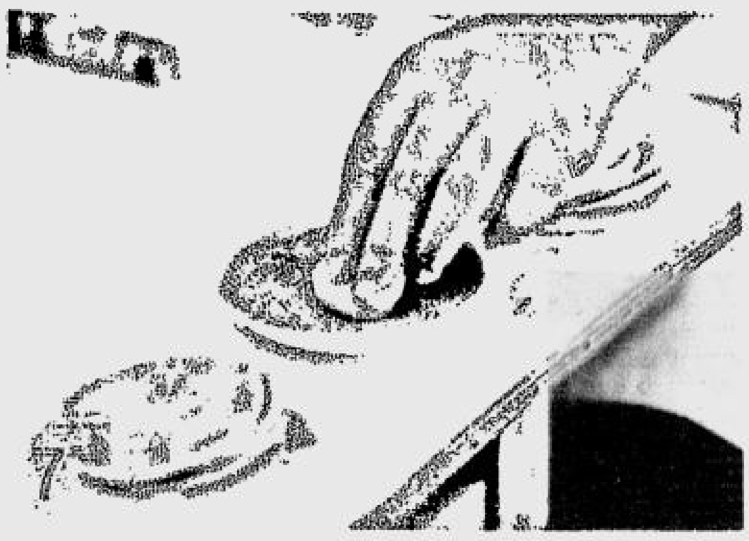


FORM the filled dough into a ball.



TOP each piece with sesame seeds.

FLATTEN the piece with a roller.

Bacolod's other major tourist draw

Text and photos by Ernie Sarmiento
Chief Photographer

THE SELLING of Negros Occidental as a major tourist destination has reached fever pitch. Weeks ago, Manila-based travel writers and photographers were brought to Bacolod City on a familiarization tour of the province's resorts and tourist spots.

But so much has already been written about the province's Masskara festival, exotic beaches, centuries-old *hacienda* houses, so it seemed time to focus on another famous Bacolod native, the *piaya*. Hardly any visitor to Negros Occidental can leave without bringing with him or her bags of the pastry for *pasalubong*.

What has become one of the more familiar symbols of Negros Occidental was originally made in Sugarlandia. To this day, Sugarlandia's version of the *piaya* remains different from those made by Johnny-come-latelys in the business. The original version not only has a distinctive taste but is also fluffy and rounded like a bun.

Owned and managed by Medalla M. Mercado, a 70-year-old retired elementary school teacher, Sugarlandia has been producing the pastry since 1930. Mercado said *piaya* making was a family tradition and the skill was handed down to her by her grandmother.

Even at her age, Mercado still does the kneading as well as mixing of *piaya*'s ingredients that include flour, vegetable oil, sesame seeds and the organic sugar called *muscovado*, the secret of the tasty, *hopia*-like delicacy. *Muscovado* is raw, unrefined brown sugar with a lingering tobacco-like aftertaste.

Aside from *piaya*, Sugarlandia also make delicious *barquillos*, *pinasugbo* (banana flakes), *biscocho* and *galletas*.

The still sprightly Medalla demonstrated how the *piaya* was made with the help of her two nephews.

Piaya

½ kg flour
½ c vegetable shortening
½ kg *muscovado* (raw sugar)
sesame seeds

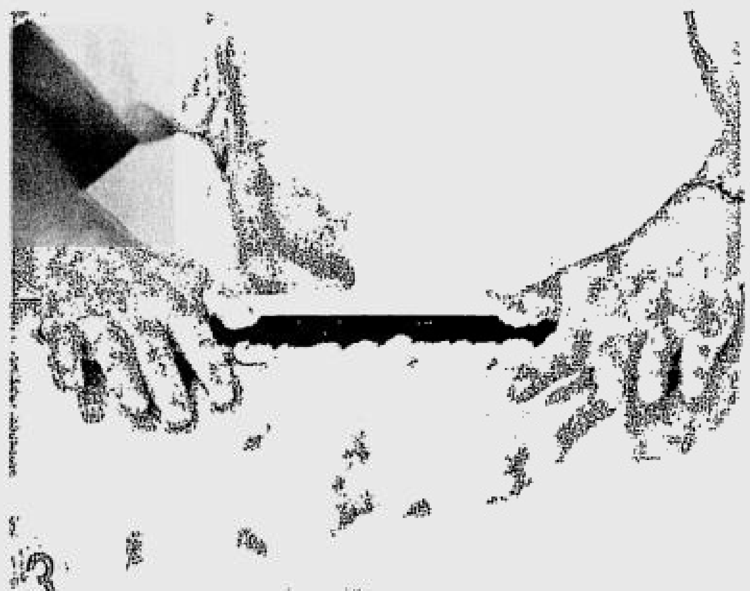
BAKE it on a heating pan for 20 minutes.

STEP BY STEP

PUT 10 grams of *muscovado* in a piece of dough.

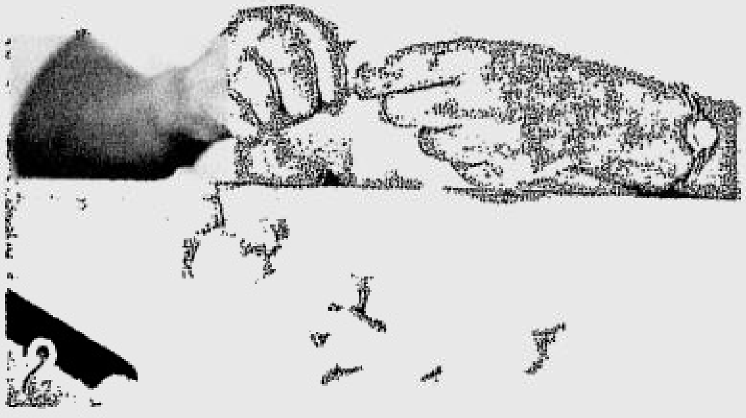
4

ROLL the dough to prepare it for filling.

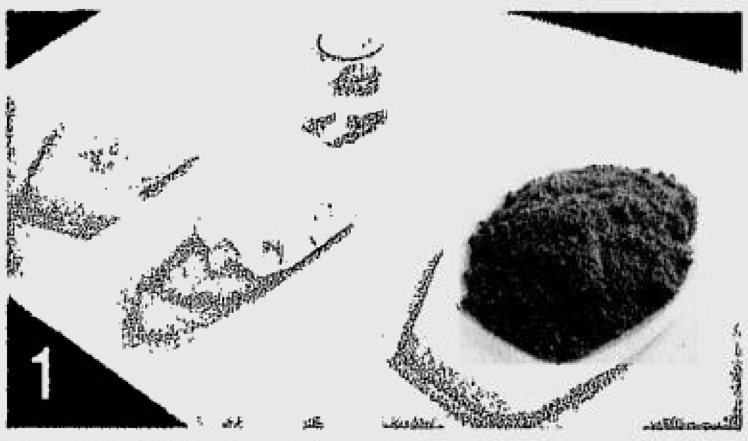


3

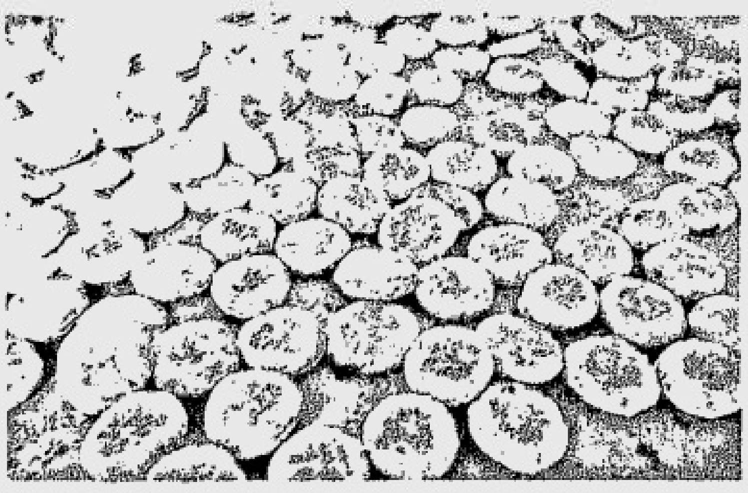
PRESS pieces with a wooden rod.



CUT it into pieces of approximately 10 grams each.



PREPARE the dough by mixing the flour and vegetable oil.



COOL *piaya* on the table.

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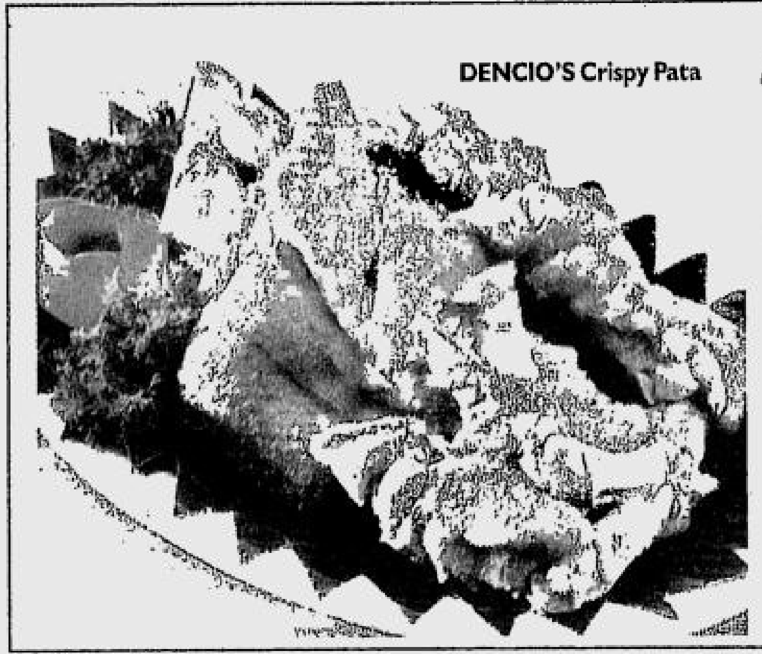

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Speedy food service at new franchises

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Dencio's Food Corporation owner Dennis Nakpil and Maritz Banana, managing director of the Las Piñas branch, said the system speeded up order-taking procedures and was user-friendly.

Dr. Perry Yap, president of the Libis outlet, and Dr. Lodgie Dujunco, managing director of the Banawe branch, also stressed the importance of the system in streamlining operations.

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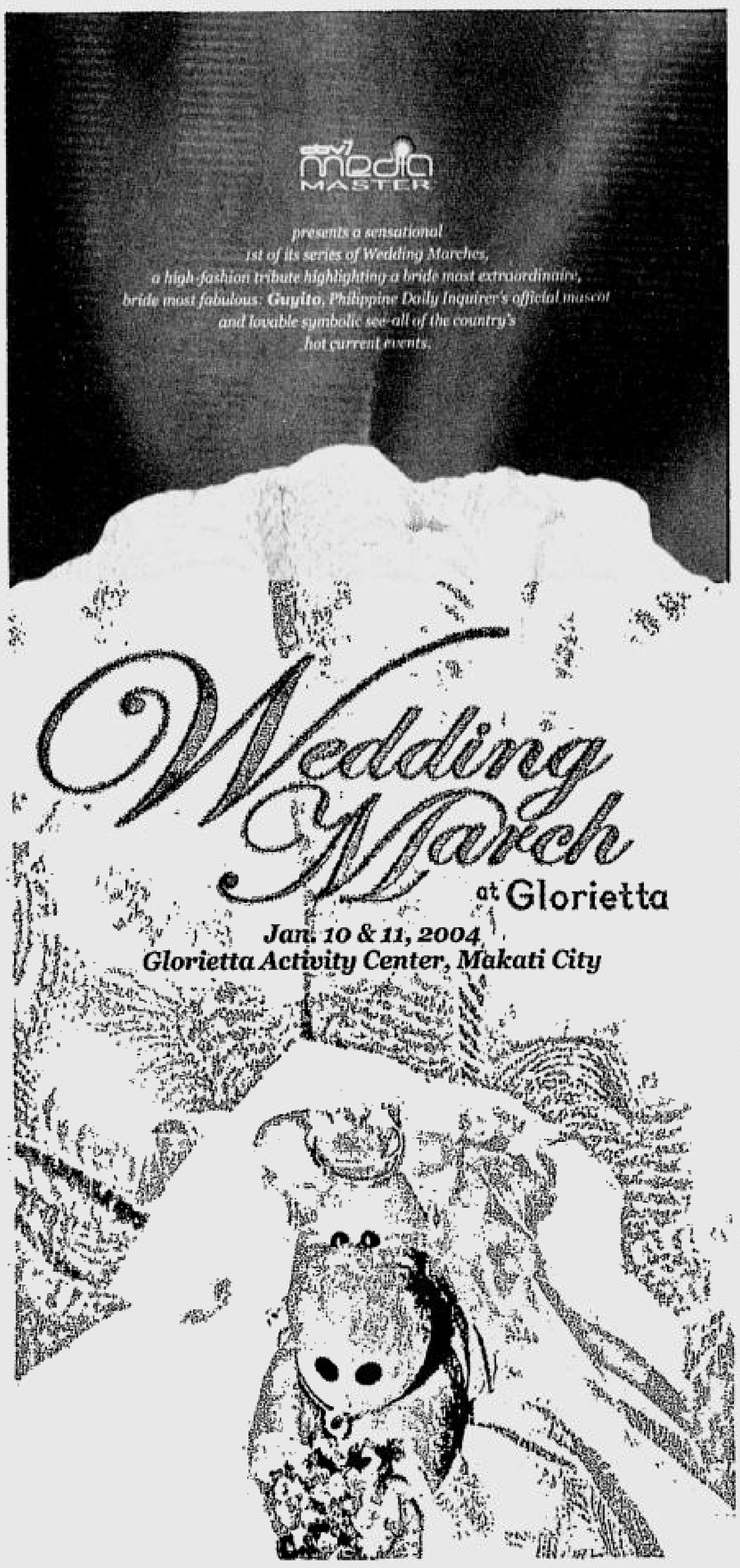

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- *On Exhibit*
  Guyito in Haute Couture bridal gowns by 10 of the Philippines' top fashion designers: Ben Farrales, Inno Sotto, Patis Tesoro, Eddie Baddeo, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel, Frederick Peralta, Jojie Lloren, Bobby Novenario and Eric Pineda
- *Dress-Up Guyito Wedding March Contest*
  In cooperation with Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the major activities of this event is this competition to dress up Guyito, PDI's official mascot. Please see contest mechanics below.
- *Accoustic Night*
  A free concert featuring: Jimmy Bondoc, Paolo Santos, Nyoy Volante and Nina
- *Raffle Draws*
  Open to suppliers/exhibitors and couples/guests
- *Wedding & Trade Fair Exhibit*
  Showcasing the country's most prominent establishments

Dress Up Guyito Wedding March"
Contest Mechanics:

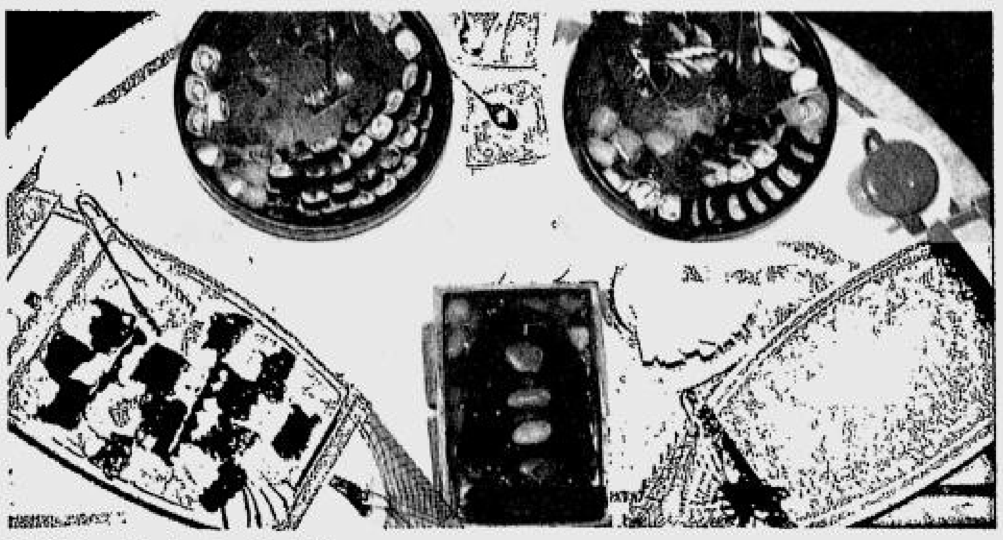
1. The contest is open to all aspiring amateur designers 18 years old and above.
2. One pair of Guyito doll entitles a contestant to one entry form. The dolls must be purchased by the contestant starting Dec. 1 to Dec. 26, 2003 from the Philippine Daily Inquirer main office at:
   Philippine Daily Inquirer Building
   Don Chino Roces Avenue
   cor. Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
   Each pair costs P350.00. A contestant may submit as many entries as he/she wants.
3. The contest theme is "Guyito's Wedding March". A contestant is tasked to dress up the doll pair in wedding ensembles (as bride and groom) of his/her own design. No perimeters shall be set with the design.
4. Criteria for judging will be based on the following: Relevance to Theme (30%), Originality (30%) and Creativity (40%). Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbc7 Media Master will be present during the judging of the contest.
5. Deadline for submission of entries is on Dec. 29, 2003, 9am to 6pm at the Philippine Daily Inquirer Head Office Marketing Department. Look for Hazel Soriaga and Mossy Cabulat.
6. Judging date will be on January 5, 2004 at Philippine Daily Inquirer main office in Don Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo), corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City at 2pm. A DTI representative shall be invited to witness the selection of the winners.
7. Winners will be notified thru phone, registered mail and will also be published in Philippine Daily Inquirer.
8. All winning entries shall automatically become the exclusive property of PDI and may be used, copied, reproduced into any size or medium for exhibition, advertising, promotion, or similar purposes. All non-winning entries will be returned to the contestants after the awarding ceremonies.
9. PDI reserves and maintains all intellectual property rights.
10. Prizes as follows:
    1st prize : P15,000 cash
    2nd prize : P10,000 cash
    3rd prize : P5,000 cash
    All cash prizes are tax free.
11. All winning entries will be displayed during the Wedding March at Glorietta in Makati City on Jan. 10, 2004. Awarding will be done on Jan. 10, 2004 at 7pm. Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbc7 Media Master will be present during the awarding.
12. Winners must present any valid I.D. (driver's license, passport, or any I.D. with picture) when claiming the prize.
13. The decision of the Board of Judges of the Dress Up Guyito Wedding March Contest contest is final and unappealable with the concurrence of the DTI.
14. Employees of PDI, cbc7 Media Master, their advertising agency, dealers, all participating outlets and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining this promotion.
15. Only entries received until Dec. 29, 2003 are qualified for the contest. A participant can send more than one entry but can only win once.
16. PDI and cbc7 Media Master reserve the right to publish or display any entry, winning or non-winning, for promotional purposes, without permission or payment of any kind to the owner of the Guyito doll.

Philippine Daily Inquirer
Tel. 897-8808 local 258 and 259

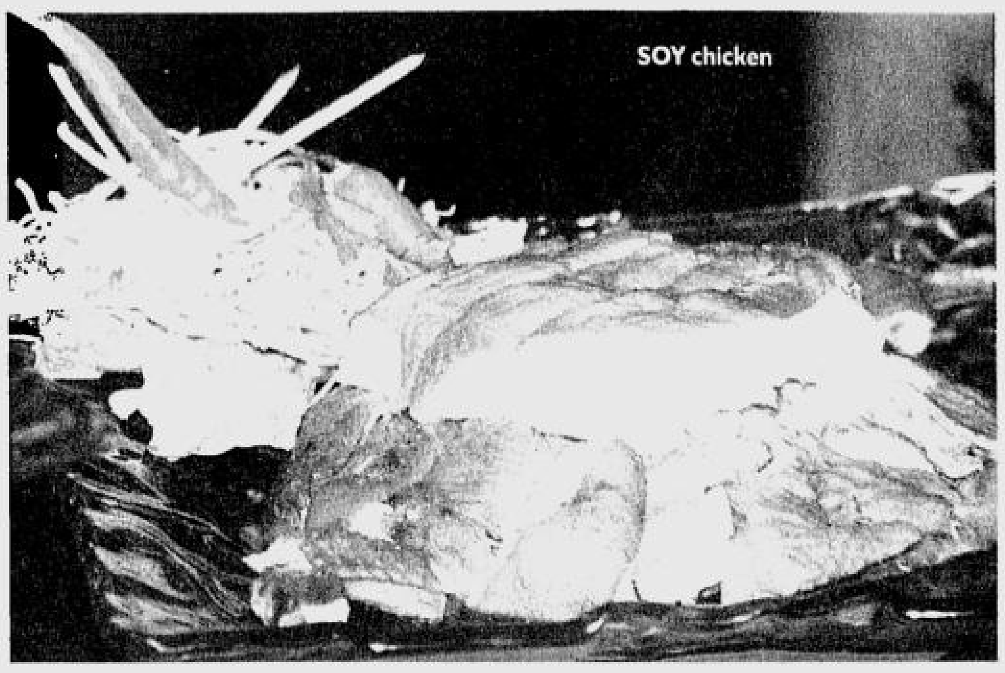
cbc7 Media Master
Tel: 8096190

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A1-641, Series of 2003

Event Stylist: Rachy Cuna



SUSHI, sashimi and maki station



SOY chicken

Hotel dining . . .

From page E1

According to Rocaverte, this three-restaurants-for-the-price-of-one offer is a real buffet bargain. And for this holiday season, Westin is even extending this good deal every day of the week.

Families can sit down and enjoy their Noche Buena meal as Westin offers a "Grand Christmas Lunch and Dinner Buffet" (P1,200+ per adult/ P650+ per child) on Dec. 24 and 25.

A romantic "Dinner and Fireworks Package" awaits couples—and families as well—on Dec. 26-30 (P888+ per person, per night). Guests can enjoy a sumptuous meal at the "Longest Buffet" and get reserved seats at the fireworks presentation where 10 countries will participate in the five-day competition. Drinks will also be served in the show.

Welcoming 2004 with a full tummy isn't a bad idea either, and thus, Westin will whip up the "Longest New Year's Eve Buffet" for Dec. 31, 6 p.m.-12 midnight (P1,300+ per adult/ P650+ per child).

Adventurous

Such buffets, though, can be overwhelming. And Pinoys happen to be notorious for filling their plates with every kind of food in sight.

"It is okay to have a little of everything. But be selective, too. Just pick what you think you'll finish," Rocaverte suggests.

To enjoy Westin's "Longest Buffet," for instance, diners can first try the jelly fish, century egg or soy chicken from China Sea. Then, relish the dishes across the globe at Café Plaza—from crispy *lechon* to sashimi to shawarma. At the other end of the buffet table, make sure to have a taste of the freshly baked pizzas and pastas at Alfiere. Lastly, wrap up the meal with a trip to the dessert table and try out Westin's popular mini truffle cake, crème brulee, fresh fruits and other yummy sweets.

JELLY fish

While Rocaverte admits Pinoy diners tend to pick the "familiar food" on the buffet table, he also recommends diners to be a little adventurous.

In Alfiere for example, he notes that customers still go for the "safe" dishes like lasagna, carbonara and four-cheese pizza. "Try something new. You might discover something you like. The great thing about a buffet is the variety. People develop a taste for certain food that they otherwise wouldn't try," he says.

And indeed, what better time to try a variety of food guilt-free than the holidays?

For reservations, call The Westin Philippine Plaza at 5515555 local 1531.

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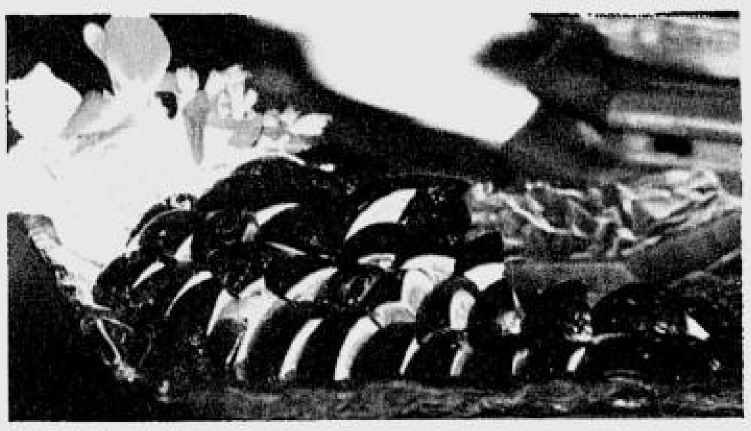
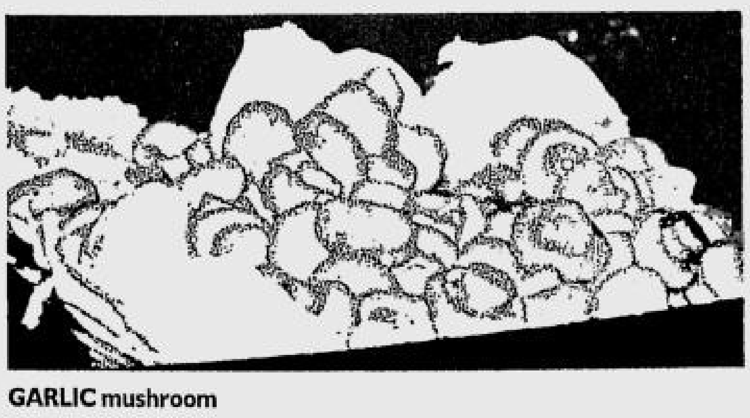
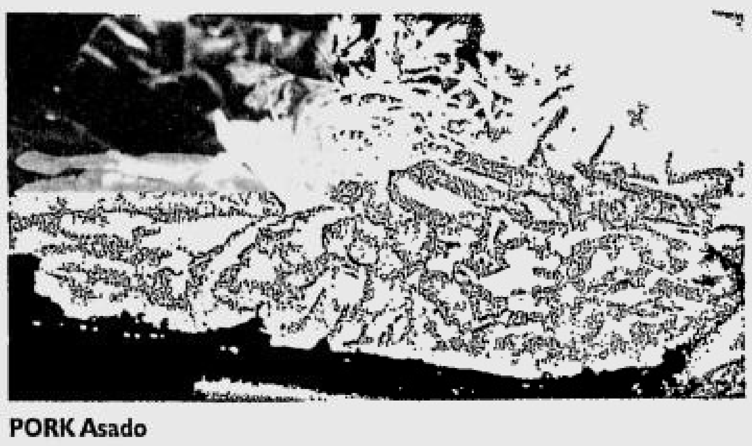


CENTURY eggs

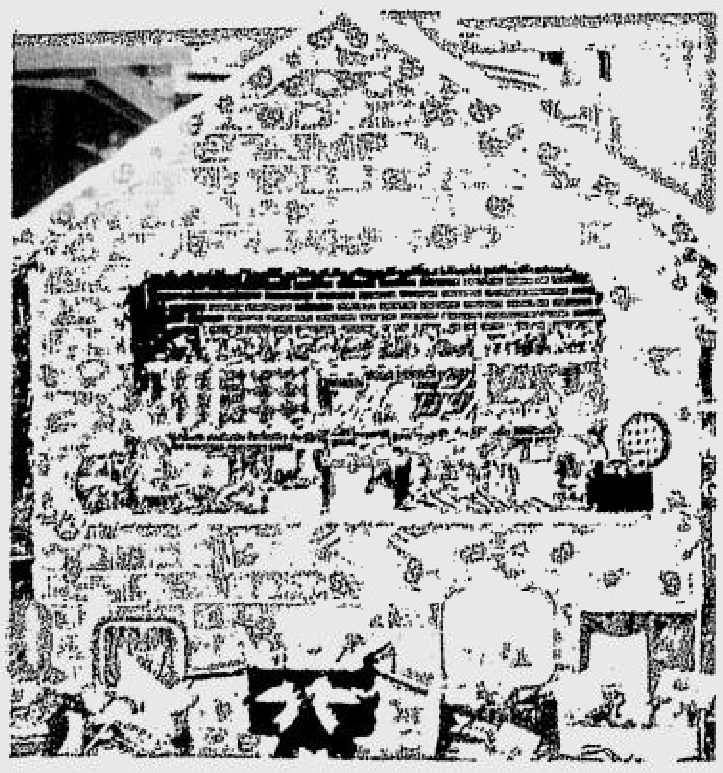


GARLIC mushroom



PORK Asado

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



HOUSE-FULL OF GOODIES

Mandarin Oriental Manila's Gingerbread House has been turned into a fanciful and enchanting structure filled with delectable Yuletide goodies from the hotel's famous delicatessen and bakery.

Open the whole month of December, the Gingerbread House is located at the hotel's lobby. A satellite outlet stands at the Ayala Alabang Center's Corte de las Palmas' UG/L near California Pizza Kitchen (CPK). The "house" was built by Mandarin Oriental's award-winning pastry team led by "Chefs on Parade" champions Ernesto Babaran, Mario Quiambao and Edgardo Butawan. It offers speciality items like pralines, pies, puddings, fruitcakes, pate, cheeses, wines, as well as a variety of Christmas hampers filled with an assortment of delicacies.

The Gingerbread House at the Mandarin Oriental's lobby is open 8 a.m.-10 p.m. daily while the satellite outlet operates during mall hours until Dec. 30. Call 7508888 local 2415."

Asian fusion Christmas buffets

DINING OUT

OFFERING a different and exciting gastronomic experience this Christmas is Satay Curry, a new Asian restaurant offering authentic Asian fusion cuisine.For a minimum of 40 persons, a buffet lunch or dinner ranging from P250-P550 is available for this entire month.The P250/pax buffet set menu includes appetizers such as Vegetable Roll and Pandan Chicken, along with the Thai Tanghon Salad and Hot and Sour Soup. The main course includes seven best-selling dishes: Chicken Curry, Sweet and Sour Pork, Beef Rendang, Fried Squid with Salt and Pepper, Nyomya Cabbage with Dried Shrimp, Hokkien Fried Noodles, and Tuna Fried Rice. For dessert, guests can binge on assorted cakes, Water Chestnut Jelly with Sago, and Pisang Goreng. The house specialties are included in the main course of the P550/pax buffet set menu, which are Roasted Lemongrass Chicken, Grilled Beef Tenderloin with Steak Sauce, Sweet and Sour Fish Roll, Pork and Chicken Satay, Sautéed Broccoli in Shrimp, Thai Chili Crab, Braised Egg Noodles and Seafood, and Pineapple Fried Rice. Call 7211730, 7257039 or visit Satay Curry at 3/L E-Square Center, 414-416 Ortigas Avenue, North Greenhills, San Juan; MM.

TIONG KEE Roast Duck House promises genuine Chinese roast duck prepared by Hong Kong-born chef James Ko using imported ingredients. It also offers other popular Hong Kong dishes like Guandong-style Roasted Pork Asado, Suckling Pig, among others. Branches are located at 834 Banawe St. corner Del Monte, Quezon City (tel. 7311023); Pasong Tamo Extension (La Fuerza Mall), Makati (8136455); 422 Lavezares St., Binondo, Manila (2459589); and Masangkay Street, Binondo, Manila (front of St. Stephen's High School, 2571522).

THE ARISTOCRAT Restaurant on Roxas Boulevard presents native dishes for the holiday. Try the Ginataan Tilapia, Tuna Honey, Grilled Tuna Belly, Grilled Squid, Diningdeng, Laing and Hipon sa Gata. Now available for dine-in, delivery and take-out. Call 24-hour take-out counter at 5247671 to 80.

GREENWICH Party Express provides you with a variety of delectable dishes in party pans or individual packs. Enjoy loads of meatier, cheesier pasta, heaps of richer, tastier Baked Rice Melt and bigger, juicier Crispy Fried Chicken.

For a minimum of P2,500, you can enjoy Greenwich Party Express.

TIONG KEE'S Tossed Roast Duck Asado Noodles

Homemade bibingka mix

IN A COUPLE of days, we will begin waking up earlier than usual to attend Simbang Gabi. And what's Simbang Gabi without *bibingka* right after the Mass?

Bibingka is made up of a batter that's poured over a mold lined with banana leaf, hence the distinct native flavor. It is then covered and cooked over charcoal fire. Its ingredients include coconut milk, sugar and special rice called *malagkit*.

Sometimes, *bibingka* may have special ingredients like salted egg, cheese and *pinipig*. To make this nice treat even more delicious, grated cheese, grated coconut and sugar are sprinkled on top.

Thankfully, you can satisfy your *bibingka* craving anytime with the Maya Oven Toaster Bibingka Cake Mix.

This mix allows you to make your own bibingka at home without the hassles of charcoal cooking. Try this recipe for Pinipig Bibingka for a hearty Pinoy breakfast, or accompany it with Battered Chicken Lollipop and Wings for a fun and filling lunch.

MORE, MORE!

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For more details and copies of the fund's prospectus, call your Philam Group agent or counsellor or call 867-3912 to 18.

*Projections are made based on historical performance. Figures can be validated from reports of the Investment Company Association of the Philippines (ICAP) and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Past performances are not indicative of future performances. The fund's performance may fluctuate.

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Philippine Business for Social Progress
33rd Annual Membership Meeting and Foundation Day

Linking Worlds to Empower Communities

MESSAGES

MY CONGRATULATIONS to the dynamic cadre of development workers, member corporations, benefactors and board of trustees of the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) on your 33rd Annual Membership Meeting and Foundation Day.

PBSP has a good track record and a rich history of social development programs that have shown tangible results in improving the lives of many poor Filipino households.

Over the years, PBSP has been the government's strong ally in crafting development strategies, in pushing for policy reforms and in mobilizing resources needed in the critical areas of environment, education, livelihood and governance, to name a few. To date, it lays claim to being the forerunner of corporate social responsibility in Asia.

Patterned after Dividendo Voluntario para la Communidad in Venezuela, PBSP's founders realized that to effect long-term change, development programs would have to be managed professionally as business ventures. Since the '70s, it has recognized the need to impart and shape development work. And so it has moulded programs to meet the demands of the times, applying the unique competencies of business to match the capabilities of needy communities.

Over time, PBSP's projects have shown increasing complexity and integration of inputs. Its time-honored principle of helping the poor help themselves, to date, holds out the best hope for alleviating poverty, unleashing human potential and achieving social development.

My administration is one with PBSP in its mission of bringing this positive social change in many Filipinos.

Mabuhay!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

THIS YEAR'S theme, "Linking Worlds to Empower Communities," is a succinct, if not a picturesque, way of dramatizing the need for all sectors of society --- the poor themselves included --- to overcome the problem of poverty and all its dire consequences. I believe poverty alleviation is not the responsibility of government alone but of every Filipino who professes love of country.

Linking worlds means purpose action, determination, and not least of all, strength. We link because we have a common purpose, we are determined to achieve that purpose, and we harness the country's collective strength because we know pursuing that purpose cannot be our sole prerogative.

Linking has also been PBSP's defining character as a corporate-led social development foundation. Long before the buzzwords of participation, collaboration, coordination became catchphrases in development, PBSP had felt it necessary that for development to succeed, communities must work with their local governments, the business community and other NGOs in the area. This was not very common then, when so much animosity existed between government and civil society. In fact, in the early days, what made PBSP unique was that it brought together - linked - the disadvantaged and business sectors together in promoting self-reliant communities. In the process, it enriched both the worldview and the experience of these sectors. This unique role has since expanded to cover a wider arena of partnerships.

This linking role has paid off, not only in terms of resources for PBSP, but more important, in the radiation effect it has generated in the communities where it works. This in itself is a feat for a non-profit organization; but it is the technologies, knowledge, values, and work ethic that we have shared through partnerships that make our accomplishments loom much larger.

As everybody says nowadays, much has to be done to make our country strong and respected. By being a strong link in a development chain, PBSP continues to reinforce its pre-eminence as one of the nation's leading anti-poverty catalysts.

MANUEL V. PANGILINAN
PBSP Chair

Dear Partners, Donors and Friends of PBSP,

Today, we hold our 33rd Annual Membership Meeting and celebrate our Foundation Day.

The fiscal year just ended was a year of awards and citations for work on poverty alleviation and corporate social responsibility. We owe all of this to you.

Our theme for this year's meeting is "Linking Worlds to Empower Communities". Through it, we wish to underscore the necessity of all of us working hand-in-hand to fulfill our common dream of a proud and respected country. On this occasion, therefore, I wish to say thank you for your support and confidence in PBSP!

Sincerely yours,

Maria Luisa Perez-Rubio
President, PBSP

A Call for Collective Action in Poverty Alleviation

BREAKTHROUGHS that win Nobel Prizes are uncommon. Rarer still are innovations in partnerships that work effectively for the common goal of alleviating poverty. Yet the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) has increasingly shown it has made significant strides towards this end.

For more than three decades, PBSP has been implementing various programs that have paved the way for concrete models of development which to this day have benefited thousands of underprivileged Filipinos.

The year 2003 has been a year of recognition of PBSP's work capped by the Special Achievement Award from the Asian Forum for Corporate Social Responsibility held in Bangkok, Thailand organized by the Asian Institute of Management. Earlier, it was conferred the Public Service Award by the Ateneo de Manila University and the Peace Award by the Ateneo de Zamboanga University.

In Bangkok, no less than Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra handed the award to PBSP whose more than three decades of outstanding contribution to the sustained practice of CSR in the Philippines has set the standard for the region, as the citation reads. In a separate occasion, His Royal Highness, Prince Charles, made a reference to PBSP as the pioneer in Corporate-Community Partnership during the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum's Development Program in London, England.

Even as we thank all our partners for all these and share these honor with all our peoples' organizations and communities, we also would like to view these citations more as an acknowledgement of PBSP's facilitating role in bringing the needs and sectors of Philippine society together to work for the common good.

Building on its 33 years of experience and know-how, some of its trailblazing approaches are characterized by integrated, multi-disciplinary, tri-sectoral and resource-based strategies to meet the challenge of poverty alleviation.

Sustainable Area Resource Management

The Area Resource Management (ARM) Program remains to be PBSP's core development strategy. This framework which takes a synergistic view of the organizational, ecological, and socio-economic improvement of a selected geographic area, brings together government, business, NGOs, donor institutions and communities in ensuring that local communities participate in, and benefit from, the economic gains.

Implemented in ten provinces nationwide, ARM programs continue to reap bountiful harvests. Last fiscal year alone, out of the more than 15,000 households reached, more than 10,000 gained access to health services, 5,420 households now have potable water and 43 percent of these have reported income increases. From the targeted 3,149 hectares of land, 52 percent have been reforested; and more than 64 percent of 1,800 hectares of lands were committed to agroforestry and crop diversification.

Active Involvement of Business Leaders & Committed Staff

PBSP melds strong business discipline with equally strong social development expertise.

Led by a 21-member Board of trustees composed of chief executive officers of top corporations in the country, PBSP's more than 200 development practitioners spread out in the regions draw up work plans, implement programs and craft strategies to benefit the grassroots. Counted among these beneficiaries are the landless farmers, marginal fisherfolk, rural workers, urban poor and indigenous cultural communities.

In the last Corporate Social Responsibility Week Expo, PBSP Chairman Manuel Pangilinan, captured this commitment to sustainability of programs and gains when he said, "The campaign against poverty must recognize the complexity and interconnectedness of its causes, must think not only of giving a man a fish, or simply teaching him how to fish, but also about whether he has a market for his catch, and if his fishing grounds are not environmentally degraded."

In a country that boasts of strong corporate involvement in poverty reduction, business leaders are increasing their efforts to meet the challenge of changing the plight of the impoverished Filipino.

Ramon del Rosario, Jr., PBSP treasurer and Chair and CEO of AB Capital and Investment Corp., advanced the notion that a consolidation of efforts would be the most effective way to overcome any form of adversity. "For some companies, their expression of social conscience is by giving donations to local civic causes or national charities in the hope of generating goodwill. Some others choose to put up their own corporate foundations. However, in this day of constricting fund sources and high operating costs, it is best not to just go it alone. In times of crises, it is better to work in the company of friends and like-minded leaders of business and industry."

Strong Corporate Citizenship and Growing Membership

Corporate social responsibility (CSR): a catchphrase of the '90s found a strong meaning in the host of social projects actively promoted by PBSP with its member companies and partner organizations in the areas of environment, education, job creation and microenterprises, appropriate technology and research development, policy setting and advocacy.

PBSP is the pioneer in the practice of CSR in the whole of Asia. It has maintained its leadership by forging broad-based partnerships and continues to assume several strategic roles in establishing high standards of operational efficiency and accountability to its corporate social investors, stakeholders and beneficiary communities. Established as the contribution of Philippine business to social development, PBSP's aim was to pool resources of business to help the poor help themselves.

Currently, some of its flagship programs include the Strategic Private Sector Partnerships in Urban Poverty Reduction (STEP-UP) in Metro Manila, Mindanao Peace and Development Program, Metro Cebu Education and Workforce Development Program, Agrarian Reform Community Support Project, Linking Worlds Series and the Small and Medium Enterprise Credit Program, to name a few.

With 180 member-companies, the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) is at the forefront of social development linking worlds to empower communities. Clearly, there is strength in numbers. As PBSP trustee and Philippine Daily Inquirer Chair Marixi Prieto admonishes, "It is the members and the Corporate Social Responsibility partners who have given PBSP its solid base and the wherewithal to deliver on its mission...it is this strength that will fortify us in our war against poverty."

PBSP and the Growth of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

**Excerpts from the Citation of Ateneo de Manila University's Public Service Awardgiven to PBSP on July 23, 2003*

THE YEAR was 1970, one of the most memorable and turbulent in Philippine history immortalized in the popular consciousness as Dekada 70.

The previous year a successful reelection campaign of President Marcos was apparently financed by a massive government deficit and the IMF loan needed to subsequently help finance government coffers mandated a devaluation of the Philippine peso and an increase in domestic interest rates. The devaluation and the increased interest rates brought about an immediate increase in petroleum prices and prices of other basic commodities. In the now infamous State of the Nation address that January 26, massive student protests exploded into violence. A series of subsequent mass actions have imprinted into the collective memory the legendary First Quarter Storm. It was an era of heightened consciousness of the injustice of the country's inequitable distribution of wealth and power and the Filipino students knew they were part of a global crusade.

In such an atmosphere, a sense of urgency enveloped the business class of the Philippines. Traditionally trained to regard business as mainly focused on profitability as the sole criterion of success and efficiency, to restrict social involvement to charity, and to consider social and political issues as beyond their area of expertise business leaders began to question themselves and their role in society. They knew the standards for professionalism and efficiency, the methods for cost-effectiveness and goal-setting, the alchemy and the science of creating wealth. But the social tensions then were already putting a damper on profitability. The communist movement seemed to be winning more of the hearts and minds of the young. And hearts and minds of business people were truly bothered by the squalor, the hopelessness, and the anger all boiling around them.

In this atmosphere the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) was born on December 16, 1970. As one of the founding members, the late Jose Soriano of the San Miguel Corporation noted, "We live in an age of social unrest. The threat of economic dislocation may be approaching explosive proportions... it is true that private enterprise has endeavored to contribute to social development ... we must equally recognize that .. our actions have been fragmentary and uncoordinated. We are thus witnesses to social projects that fail to respond to the immediate needs of people".

The PBSP was a pioneering effort in what is now popularly known as corporate social responsibility. Business people have developed a mechanism by which they can undertake major social development projects on a scale that their individual firms might be unable to solely undertake.

The PBSP became a mechanism for business people to meet and understand ordinary people and their conditions. Professionals in social development gained access to substantial resources that can help realize their own goals for social upliftment. But social development staffers also had to learn to fulfill business standards of efficiency, cost-effectiveness and quantifiable results. And business also began to appreciate the need for a gradual, long-term process of development, of goals and objectives beyond mere increases in income, such novel ideas as capacity-building, institution-building and empowerment. Continuous dialogue between business and social development professionals was built-in to the PBSP's strategies and operations and in the process diminished the mutual exclusivity of the domains of the two.

The results have been too evident to be ignored. From about 1972-1999, 170 member-companies contributed PHP512.8 million, which supported 4193 projects that benefited nearly two million households. PBSP developed technologies, management processes, internal audit and reporting procedures and operational skills in development management.

The experience and track record have allowed PBSP to also assist other institutions in their operations. Training on financial management and bookkeeping have been provided to NGOs. Expertise in community organizing has been extended to business firms in their own individual community development programs.

More than mere project development and management, PBSP has already institutionalized the habit of dialogue and discussion as essential anchors to its operations and strategies. The Center for Corporate Citizenship is a forum that allows business people to discuss social issues of common concern. The Corporate Citizenship Resource Center is a forum for business and civil society groups to meet and discuss various social issues.

Although many skeptics and doubters remain even in the business community, and in fact most business establishments have yet to join the PBSP, nonetheless corporate social responsibility is now taken for granted as an essential element in business activities throughout the world. Indeed the Philippines can take pride in the fact that corporate social responsibility first took root in our country long before it ever did in the so-called advanced industrial countries of the West, including Britain and the United States of America. This is a heritage our country should cherish and we owe much of it to the PBSP.

Although it is true that communities have benefited from the projects of the PBSP, the member firms themselves humbly acknowledge that through their involvement with social development, they themselves have changed since 1970. They established links with the rest of society and have managed to confidently identify and secure their own place as concerned and empowered citizens of the Republic. It must also be said that much as the business people have seen and met the poor, the poor have also seen and met the business people.

The great economist Adam Smith more than two centuries ago actually dedicated his economic writings to expose what he wrote as "the mean rapacity, the monopolizing spirit of merchants and manufacturers, who neither are nor ought to be the rulers of mankind". Indeed the most colorful invectives ever written against business people were the crisp paragraphs and sentences of Adam Smith, popularly regarded as the apostle of capitalism. Perhaps it ought to be a source of pride to us Filipinos that our own business classes have managed to prove him wrong on many counts. That business pursued profit as essential to its own self-interest there is no doubt. But that business also values social justice and compassion for the common person there is less doubt now than before. This we owe to the PBSP.

PBSP receives the Special Achievement Award from Asian Forum on CSR and a Public Service Award from Ateneo de Manila.

pbsp member companies

Abojitz
Jebsens
ACC International Trading
Agencia Bacolod
AIRLIFT ASIA INC
All Asia Bank
American Wire & Cable Company
Anflo Management and Investment Corporation
APO
Asian Appraisal
AIG
Atlas Consolidated Mining & Development Corp
BASIC CONSOLIDATED, Inc.
BenguetCorp
BIO-TECH
BJ Coco Oil Mill, Inc
Castilex Industrial Corporation
DAILY NEWS
CEBU POWER
citibank
CONPINCO
CIGI
CREDIT SUISSE
Davao Light & Power Co., Inc.
DELBROS
Busa Printers
Dole
EAST ASIA UTILITIES
East-West Seed Co., Inc.
Energizer
Ephraim
Equitable PCI
F.S. Dizon & Sons, Inc.
FILWAY
FIRST CONSOLIDATED BANK
First e-Bank
Francisco Motors Corporation
GINEBRA SAN MIGUEL
HARBEST
IBM
ILIGAN CEMENT CORPORATION
Infos, Inc.
International Container Terminal Services, Inc
Heinz
HO TONG HARDWARE, INC.
HOOVEN PHILIPPINES INC.
Jardines
JEWM Agro Ind'l Corp
LANDCO PACIFIC
LMG Chemicals Corporation
MANILA BANKERS LIFE
MARCEL CARRAGEENAN
Marsman-Drysdale Group
MCPI-Dating Bayan Agro-Industrial Corporation
Menzi & CO., INC.
mercury drug
Metro Stonerich Corporation
Modern Glass Distributors, Inc.
Monark CAT
Optima Typographics
Organizational Performance Associates, Inc
Oriental & Motolite Corporation
Oxiana
PALL ROCES CORPORATION
PCCCI Cooperative Development Center
PEOPLES AGRI SERVICE & SUPPLY, INC
PETRON
PHILEX MINING
PHILACOR
INQUIRER
PHINMA
PLDT
PTFC & RC
PHILIPS
Philtranco
PILIPINAS KAO INC
PIONEER
PLANTERSBANK
Ponce-Millan Realty, Inc
Punongbayan & Araullo
Quezon City Theatrical Enterprises, Inc.
Rine
RMC
Rizal Theatrical Co., Inc
RJS Industrial Construction & Development Corporation
Rocca Drug Corporation
Roxas and Company, Inc
SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION
Sarangani Agricultural Co., Inc.
Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation
SCCP Land, Inc.
SKYCABLE
SAFI Southeast Asia Food, Inc.
SIG
Sta. Ana, Rivera and Company, CPA's
Sun
SUNSTAR
Telengtan Brothers & Sons, Inc
The Freeman
Shell companies in the Philippines
Trans-Philippines Investment Corporation
Unilever
UNIONBANK
Union Carbide
UNION
UNISYS
WIP
Wise Holdings, Inc.
Wyeth
THE ZUELLIG CORPORATION

PBSP: A Leader in Corporate Citizenship

In the past five years, the development community endorsed the mode of trisectoral governance in public affairs. Putting sense and substance in these strategic alliances, the Center for Corporate Citizenship (CCC), PBSP's research and development arm for CSR, formed advisory committees which covered important sectors and tackled a wide spectrum of issues.

Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo and Tagaytay Mayor Francis Tolentino, President of the League of Cities, championed the committee on Local Government Units (LGUs) as CSR Enablers.

Self-made, high-flying business leader from Mindanao Datu Ibrahim Paglas III convened executive briefings with other business groups and drew support for the Mindanao Business and Peace Program. One of the components of this program is the Young Professionals for Peace (YuPPeace), an internship program through which Mindanao-based Muslim entrepreneurs are deployed in leading multinational corporations (MNCs) in Manila to learn the stringent standards of international business and eventually replicate learnings in their respective companies. The project is anchored on a lot of goodwill and banks largely on the young entrepreneurs' exposure to multicultural diversity.

To date, two YuPPeace interns have finished their engagement. As six more interns are currently undergoing their engagement, 15 more Manila-based British firms have expressed strong interest to be host companies.

The Center, likewise, continues to address emerging environmental issues through the Stakeholders Engagement Program. Chief executive officers of mining companies and other extractive industries shared their views and upheld their commitment to institute CSR principles in codes of conduct and assist the government in policy setting.

Important testimonies given by stakeholders from business, government and civil society groups are documented in PBSP's most recent publications: *Living in the Present, Planning for the Future: A Manual for Community-based Coastal Resource Planning, Linking Worlds,* the first ever resource book on employee volunteerism and *Strengthening Workplace Responses to HIV/AIDS in the Philippines.*

Similarly, Levi Strauss with Terence Higgins Trust and network photographers staged seven exhibits of the Positive Lives Caravan, a traveling photo-exhibit to highten compassion for persons with HIV-AIDS, in major cities across the country. New books to be launched during the 33rd Annual Membership Meeting are *2nd Edition: STI and HIV/AIDS Peer Education and Counselling: Learning Course Manual for Trainers and Enhancing Business-Community Relations: The Role of Volunteers in Promoting Global Corporate Citizenship.*

Ten new cases were developed for the Corporate-Community Partnership engagement with United Nations Volunteers for a number of corporations.

Four major researches were completed this year. These are: Muslim Business Mapping Research, CSR Perception Survey with Government Incentives for CSR Investments, and Enhancing Business Community Relations: The Role of Volunteers in Promoting Global Corporate Citizenship.

PBSP, through CCC, has improved its network of international organizations. Most of them are CSR advocates and have pursued their causes with unequalled passion. Sustain-Ability, International Business Leaders Forum, USAID (for the Asian Environmental Program), British Chamber of Commerce, Thai Business Coalition on AIDS, Pinoy Rin and De La Salle University-Graduate School of Business are a few of the formal linkages that PBSP has established.

For more information on the publications and case studies, please visit our Corporate Citizenship Resource Center at the PBSP office at PSDC Bldg, Magallanes corner Real Streets, Intramuros, Manila. URL://www.pbsp.org.ph; telephone numbers: 527-7741to 51; fax: 5273143.

IAN FORUM ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
JULY 3, 2002, 1:30 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. – DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO, MAKATI CITY
ENCHMARKING CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP
BREAKOUT SESSION
IN PARTNERSHI
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School desk chairs for better future

CHRISTMAS came early for the school children of remote Ilocos Sur and La Union towns when over a thousand desk chairs were donated to their schools. Now, the children of Burgos Elementary School in Burgos, La Union, San Jose Elementary School in Sta. Cruz, Magsingal National High School, and five other public schools in that tobacco-growing region are now enjoying the use of the sturdy fiberglass desk chairs. The donations certainly boost the paltry ratio of chairs to students, and the morale in the public schools.

This project is a follow through of previous education-related projects, such as the construction of a three-classroom building also for San Jose Elementary school in Sta. Cruz, Ilocos Sur that was inaugurated last year. Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing, Inc. (PMPMI) in partnership with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), funded the rehabilitation of a number of school buildings in Batangas, as well as the distribution of textbooks to public schools in that province.

In all the four desk chair turnover ceremonies in the towns of Burgos, Magsingal, Banay, and Aringgay, representatives from the Department of Education (DepEd), as well as the mayors and other local government leaders thanked and lauded this PMPI gesture. They all noted how private companies like PMPMI provide them with the basic needs that should really be supplied the government institutions they represent.

Dr Vilma Labrador, DepEd Regional Director, admitted the inability of the DepEd to provide what it is mandated to do because of so many factors. She stressed the need for the school beneficiaries to take care of the desk chairs and to see their deeper significance in the lives of the generations of school children to come. "The only way to show our gratitude is to maintain the beauty of the chairs."

Pulling a metaphor, Dr. Labrador declared, "The chairs have a deeper substance in the field of education. It is a symbol of our children preparing for a better future, preparing for our country's future."

Education Needs

PBSP and its corporate social responsbility (CSR) partners like Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing, Inc. are responding to the very real and glaring needs of the education sector, institutionally, and of the youth, fundamentally. On the average, 120 elementary pupils have to be accommodated in one single, average-sized classroom, where most of them "sit on the floor," observed Dr. Labrador.

The figure drops at the high school level since a good number of school-age children lose interest or time in studying. The prospect of moving onto college gets even bleaker for most of them. According to Mansanto National High School principal Eulalia Lim-Ondasan, a paltry 30% of their graduates actually go to college. Talking to some of the fourth year students in Magsingal High School, where one of the turnover ceremonies took place, most of the students just smile off the idea of ever continuing to college. "*Siguro po magka-college kami. Hindi pa po namin alam.* (Maybe we will go to college. We really don't know yet.)" grinned Amy, a fourth-year student, who said she wanted to be a nurse.

PMPMI Community Relations consultant Mabel Mamba attests to the dismal physical state of the schools. "When we visited them a few months ago, I would see the school kids sitting wherever they could, like on softdrink crates, on their bags, or on boxes if the floor is not even cemented well enough to sit on. Whatever desk chairs they had would often be missing some parts, like the backrest, portions of the seat, or the desk itself."

If the physical accommodations in the schools are dismal, the teacher-student ratio is even more pathetic, so much so that a DepEd circular just pegged the figure to one teacher for every 56 pupils. This is purportedly to prevent the number of pupils per teacher from going any higher.

Corporate Social Responsibility

The beneficiary schools are in the areas where PMPMI sources its raw materials. The cigarette giant's social responsibility projects have been continuous over the past three years. Sta. Cruz town Mayor Teresita Valle attests to this. In her town, the projects include a three-classroom school building for the San Jose Elementary School, where there are 11 teachers for 285 pupils.

Sta. Cruz is now also enjoying the potable water supply made possible through PMPI spring development project. Through the school compound runs the pipeline supplying potable water from a spring source in a higher area. San Jose Elementary School head teacher Florencia Gutierrez called this "the best gift of God." She said that before this project was done, they had to buy water from the next town at P30 per drum, especially during summer. When the pipeline became operational, the water that now comes out is even a lot better than the one they used to buy. Ms. Gutierrez said she really feels so blessed that her town, particularly her school, continues to be a recipient of PMPMI generosity.

Other youth-oriented projects being pursued by PMPMI include the Youth Smoking Prevention campaign or YSP. This is a three-pronged strategy geared toward preventing children from smoking. One part is an education campaign warning children against the dangers of smoking; another is the prevention of minors from accessing cigarette retailers, and a third is a sustained media campaign. The first one is being undertaken with the University of Asia and the Pacific. The second one provides for PMPMI's their own delivery crew to warn retailers against selling to minors. The third airs value-laden television campaign showing that one does not have to smoke to be cool.

"Cigarette smoking is always dangerous even to adults, and we cannot deny that fact. That is why we state it plainly in our ads," pointed out Dave Gomez, PMPMI Public Affairs and Communications Manager.

As if to echo this concern for the youth, Mamba, in the desk chair turnover ceremonies before her audience of students, teachers, and parents, declared, "We do not want children to smoke."

What is topmost inPMPMI's their corporate citizen mind is for children to go to schools with enough chairs and school facilities. Its early Christmas donations have, in fact, brought a lot of good cheer.

BELOW
18
YEARS

SALE/DISTRIBUTION TO OR PURCHASE BY MINORS
OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS IS UNLAWFUL

PHILIPPINES JCI Jaycees
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT NATIONAL YOUTH COMMISSION
Sangguniang Kabataan

Bearer of light

By Ditas Bermudez

IN WAGING war against the adversary that is poverty, they blaze untrodden paths, brave conflict conflict areas, dare go out of their comfort zones, do things that exist not in their job description and give a face to PBSP in communities that do not even know what NGO means.

They are PBSP's links to the communities --- project officers, program coordinators, community organizers, and their stories are often left untold. This is one story of a man who shares the life of the people he serves.

NANDY Ocampo "Huwag mo silang buhatin, akayin mo lang".

Fernando "Nandy" Tanwangco Ocampo remembers the scene very vividly: A heated argument leads to a fight. A chase ensues. Someone draws a dagger. The entire neighborhood braces itself for bloodshed. *"Pumagitna ako sa gulo, inawat ko sila,"* the community organizer recalls, still amazed at his daring. In retrospect, he thinks he should have foreseen the clash and addressed the issue differently.

Gratefully, he has never had to deal with anything as violent although there are always recalcitrants, non-believers in the program who just refuse to participate and somehow manage to convince others to also withdraw their support from the organization.

No stranger to dealing with urban poor - having been with the urban affairs division of a local government for at least seven years prior to joining PBSP on January 15, 1993 - Nandy understands the jaded outlook of some beneficiaries. "They have grown so accustomed to being used that when we introduce a project, it is difficult for them to give their trust and to believe that there is such a program being given for free," the community organizer explains. What invariably works is to lay down his cards to prove the sincerity of the institution. "We make it clear that it's a partnership, that they have to put in sweat equity as their share," he adds.

He does not mind spending half a day delegating tasks because he knows this is crucial in making beneficiaries consider the project as their own. "The key is to identify second line leaders," Nandy claims, narrating how he takes advantage of the moments others are wont to consider a waste of time: *"Pag inimbita kang kumain*, that's your chance to interact with the family. That interaction gives you leverage in getting to know a person." An important step taken by STEP-UP (Strategic Private Sector Partnerships for Urban Poverty Reduction Program in Metro Manila) in Taguig and in other sites is developing leaders by encouraging participation. Nandy sums up the process: *"Huwag mo silang buhatin, akayin mo lang."*

A decade into community organizing, Nandy admits, "my relationship with the community will never be merely functional." Indeed, when he says he is at home in the communities where he works, Nandy underscores the importance of people over project results - an insight he has learned early on from his own mother who used to do a lot of volunteer work. It also speaks of a more profound understanding of community work. "This is not just a profession, it's a vocation," he declares.

"Has he ever dreamt of working outside of urban affairs?" he is asked. The answer is a mouthful: "I thought of putting up my own business, having finished business administration, but I realized this business I'm currently in is something I'm trying to be good at and I've learned to love. Aside from organizing, I'm also handling training, something I really love doing. I used to ignore processes because I get impatient when people don't get what I'm trying to get across. I've observed that when I let people go through the process of identifying issues and concerns and possible solutions and the role each has to play, they eventually learn - and how! Ultimately, I think I never really abandoned business management because community organizing is all about managing people."

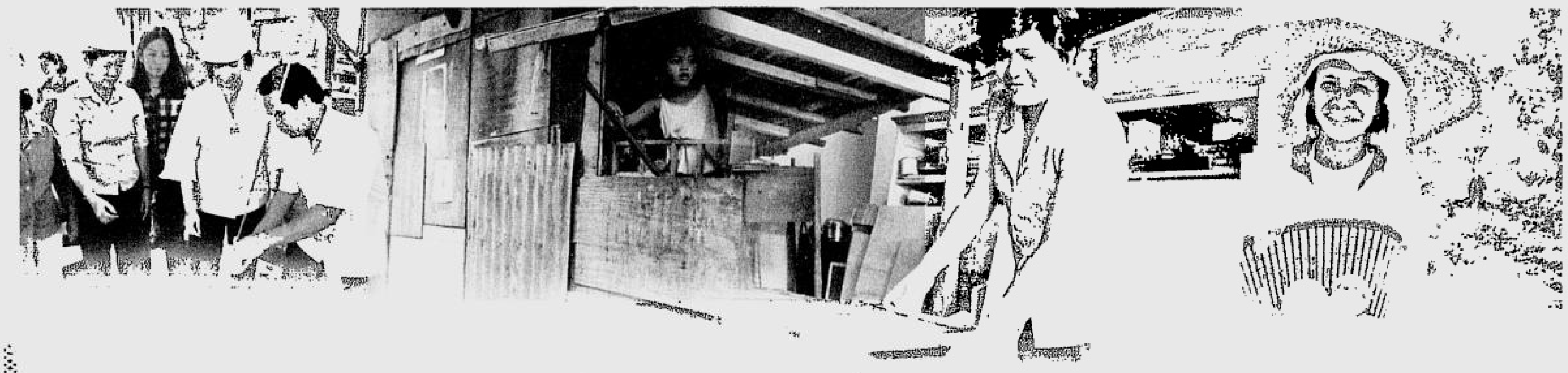
He relishes the fact that he gets his hands on everything community work entails - from conceptualization to drawing up project proposals to implementation to evaluation - something one can't easily find in any other job. "To be able to do all that, to multitask, is very attractive for people like me who don't want to be saddled by monotonous work," Nandy admits.

Having a job that knows no weekends (training is invariably held on Saturdays when community folk are home) has its drawbacks for a family man. Nandy knew this even before he started working with PBSP. "My coping mechanism is to try to expose my family to the work that I do," he says, *"Minsan kasama ko sa training yung mga anak ko*. Sometimes, during Saturday meetings with leaders, I take them with me. The thing here, as in any kind of job, is of course, the way you manage your time. If you do your work well and everyone cooperates, by 5 p.m. *pauwi ka na."* He doesn't let the community, which has become a kind of extended family to him, take time away from his own family.

Nandy says, *Dati madalas akong mag-rally para iparating sa mga nakatataas na kailangan ng pagbabago sa lipunan.* But in STEP-UP, the arena is the community. I don't have to take to the streets to seek for a change *kasi buhay na buhay ang pagbabago sa harap ko."* Now more than ever, Nandy believes that the community is the smallest unit where you could effect change effectively. He gives no deadlines for this change to take effect: *"Minsan* when you conduct an impact assessment, the tendency is to just skim through the surface and present the physical results. But there is a social side of the project, which we often fail to recognize but which, ultimately, is what binds PBSP with the community. That's something the reports fail to reflect."

Nandy sees himself involved in community work for as long as he is able. "I'll probably move on to mentoring, giving training to younger community organizers," he says, knowing that his job is a masterpiece in progress. "*...maaaring hindi sa kamay mo magiging buo ang obra kundi sa kamay ng iba* to whom you've passed on part of your values," he muses.

He looks forward to the day when the communities he has helped "step up in life" can tread the path on their own: "I look at the leaders as future community organizers...*Parang alitaptap ang mga* community organizers, *may ilaw*. We spread light to the community hoping that later on, that light will also be passed on to the rest." Nandy could have been paraphrasing St. Francis of Assisi who once said: "There is always more growing yet to come, and more light yet to shine."



Transforming Urban Shanties to Livable Homes

LONG, uneven wooden planks pieced together and built precariously atop murky, stagnant water are a common site in the inner sanctuaries of more than 1.4 million informal settlers concentrated mostly in Metro Manila.

With the unabated influx of rural migrants to the city in search of a better life, the living standards of urban poor communities have worsened. It is estimated that 35% of Metro Manila's population live in slum areas with inadequate access to potable water, high unemployment rates, substandard homes, and poor sanitation, to say the least. We have often heard of tragedies in recent months where these poor, unfortunate souls were wiped out by community calamities such as the freaky fire accidents as in Baseco area and landslides in dumpsite communities.

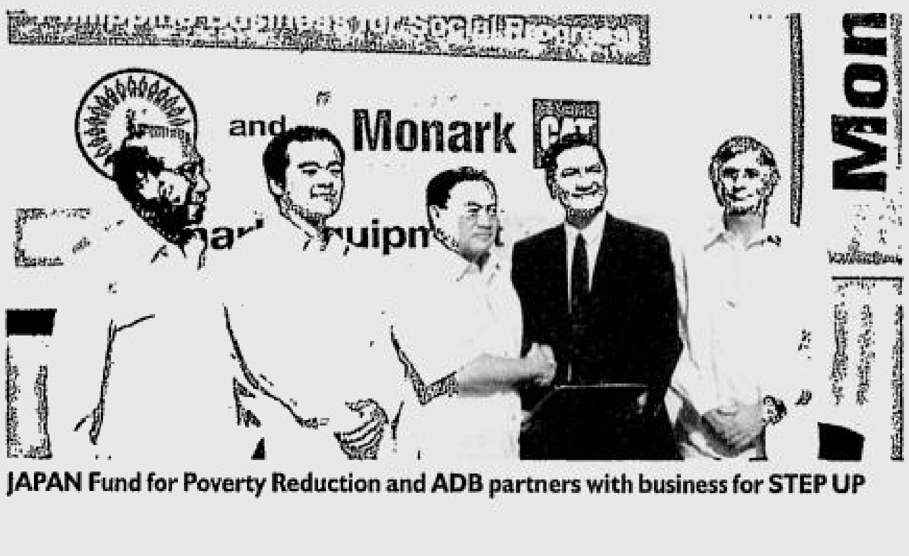
Recognizing that the growing problem of urban poverty should also be supported by the business sector, the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) with the support of the Government of Japan through the Japanese Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) Program being administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and in partnership with HUDCC, launched the Strategic Private Sector Partnerships for Urban Poverty Reduction in Metro Manila or STEP-UP program last year.

Synergy Personified in Step-up-Promoting Self-reliance and Responsibility

Although skeptics may think that this approach nurtures a dole-out mentality, such is not the case. Sustainability is ensured through helping community leaders fend for themselves. It was made clear to the community leaders and members of the People's Organizations that PBSP and its corporate partners would not be there to help forever thus they had to learn to stand on their own. "Our role is to help people help themselves", says Mrs. Ma. Luisa Perez-Rubio, President of PBSP.

For communities to sustain their initial gains, local people's organizations have to persevere and work together in order, putting in their share to make the program a success. As a policy, sweat equity is required of the residents for the construction of roads and multi-purpose centers, while mandatory loan repayments are instituted for the micro-finance fund to assist women entrepreneurs. Such a comprehensive strategy is key to the program's sustainability and in building self-reliance and responsibility among beneficiaries.

BETTER roads and houses for the urban poor.



JAPAN Fund for Poverty Reduction and ADB partners with business for STEP UP

Learning from the Experience

Culling lessons from the rich experience of the NCR-ARM Program, PBSP applied an

enhanced approach in a follow-on initiative. In 1997, similar depressed communities were adopted in Taguig and Muntinlupa. This time, however, focus was placed on establishing multi-sectoral partnerships. This meant working closely with the business community, local government units, people's organizations, the academe and various non-government organizations, bringing all sectors of society to work together

Today, rather than just being looked upon as a funding source for projects or stand alone events and activities, companies like Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation in Taguig and Monark in Libis, Quezon City are engaged more broadly in crafting the municipal development plans. Local community leaders have been given a seat at the discussion and negotiating table, especially during decision-making on land tenure and community site development issues. Local government and national line agencies, on the other hand, recognize the importance of participation, consultation and genuine partnership in the delivery of much needed services to their constituents.

PBSP has also realized that it is efficient in achieving its goals by working with like-minded not-for-profit organizations already on site. The idea is not to replicate what other NGOs are doing, but rather enhance and complement each other's efforts. As a result, on-going housing construction projects are being implemented in partnership with the Habitat for Humanity chapters in Taguig and Muntinlupa. This scheme maximizes the resources among partners.

SCALING UP with STEP-UP

With HUDCC as the executing agency and PBSP as the implementing agency, the STEP-UP Program is a corporate-led strategy, which employs an innovative integrated urban development approach. $ 3.6 million US dollars has been allocated by JFPR-ADB for the improvement of roads and drainage, community infrastructure, house upgrading, livelihood assistance and crisis management training. PBSP has committed to raise an equivalent of $ 3.33 million US dollars in financial and in-kind counterpart assistance from civil society organizations partners and mainly from the private sector.

As Michael Lindfiled, a Senior Housing specialist in ADB points out, "We have initiated several pilot activities, the latest being the PBSP program that aims to promote corporate involvement in a more meaningful way, with strategic, focused and measurable impact on the lives of the urban poor." He adds, "while the government's community mortgage program has enabled numerous urban poor communities in Metro Manila to secure land tenure -many have remained mired in poverty and suffer a degraded quality of life due to the lack of access to basic services, livelihood opportunities and overall community development."

In three years, STEP-UP aims to reduce poverty and improve the living conditions of 5,823 urban poor families in 23 communities from nine cities in Metro Manila, namely Malabon, Caloocan, Mandaluyong, Manila, Marikina, Quezon City, Pasig, Taguig and Muntinlupa.

As in PBSP's previous program, STEP-UP is a convergence model among many stakeholders. However, an added feature of the program is the risk reduction and management. Since most of these communities are prone to floods, fire, and other disasters, the program helps develop people's capabilities in preventing and responding to disasters, as well as providing basic equipment for disaster mitigation. The aim is to protect and preserve the infrastructure and lives in these communities from onslaught.

The program will be anchored on building and strengthening strategic public-private partnerships. Led by a Business Consensus Group, employee volunteers and professionals such as architects, engineers, contractors and designers share their time, talents and expertise in drawing up plans keeping in mind the structural soundness complementing them with aesthetic values.

Regarding the vital role of partnering with NGOs, Mr. Pedro Roxas, PBSP Board of Trustee and CEO of Central Azucarrera Don Pedro says, "What is important is that we don't duplicate what others are doing. We need to tap the expertise of and ensure that our support leverages and complements what they are already doing".

Since CMP sites have been selected, revolving funds for housing improvement is made available. The loan per single family may range anywhere between P 15,000 - P 70,000, depending on the need. The private sector is encouraged to participate through housing materials donation and/or technical assistance for architectural housing designs. One-time grant assistance is given to the communities for the construction of water facilities, drainage, roads, re-blocking and other infrastructure needed in the community, such as multi-purpose centers, which are used as day care centers, and training centers. A revolving fund is also be established to provide loans to qualified micro-entrepreneurs with the principle that once they are economically empowered, repayments for home improvements will follow.

Eight months into the program, a lot may have been done but much more have yet to be achieved when looking at the scope and scale of this urban blight.

"Businesses and people who want to help need not go out of their way. They can start by look at its core strengths and identify any of the nine municipalities, and it should find a way to engage and help in STEP-UP, said Mr. Juan B. Santos, Chairman of Nestle Philippines and PBSP Board of Trustee.

A collective effort and a new mindset is called for to make STEP-UP work. True. As ADB's Lindfield sums up, "the project links the underprivileged to opportunities by providing them the wherewithal to help themselves and with contacts and role models." Come to think of it, STEP-UP might just be what this country needs.

STEP-UP, after all, transforms urban shanties into livable homes with healthy human beings contributing to the betterment of their community and their society.

JUAN B. Santos, Chairman Nestle Philippines Inc. and Chair, PBSP Business Concensus Group for STEP UP.

THE METRO CEBU WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION PROGRAM:

Bridging the Gap to Respond to the Needs of the Times

By Nichee C. Alejo

FRUSTRATION and pain were how retrenched workers like Alvin Monsulin strongly felt about being laid off from work in 1997 at the height of the Asian financial crisis.

He had devoted 11 years of life to the company and was definitely not prepared for the worst. His critical problem now as the sole breadwinner was how to put food on the table and send his two children to school.

Life wasn't as bleak though in the early '90s. At the height of the "Ceboom" phenomenon, investments poured in and economic opportunities mushroomed for the Cebuanos. The exhilaration, however, was short-lived.

The Birth of the Metro Cebu WorkForce Development & Education Program

The economic catastrophe in the Asian region in 1997 challenged PBSP to become a prime mover in helping displaced workers in Cebu have access to sustained livelihood by forming cooperatives. This initiative gave birth to the Metro Cebu Workforce Development and Education Program (WDEP).

The first pilot project of WDEP was the Tabok Multi-Purpose Cooperative. Pacific Traders, a Mandaue City-based furniture export firm and a member of PBSP, advised its workers who would be affected by downsizing, to form a cooperative.

Little did the workers know that the retrenchment was a blessing in disguise. For as events would later show that such an apparent misfortune would become the invisible force behind their own empowerment and triumph.

A PROUD member Tabok Multi-Purpose Cooperative

Through a soft loan from Pacific Traders and with financial assistance from United States Assistance for International Development (USAID), a multipurpose building from Angelo King Foundation and extensive technical training obtained through PBSP, the Tabok Multipurpose cooperative after six years had gained P 11 M in financial assets including three property investments with earnings of over P 500,000 a month. From 30, the cooperative increased its membership to 1,036.

"We never expected our cooperative to grow this big. Who would have thought that plain skilled workers with no college degrees could earn millions and acquire properties. We never ceased to be grateful to PBSP and to Pacific Traders for their all-out support and trust in our capability to succeed," Monsulin said.

The success of the Tabok Cooperative served as a role model for replication in five other PBSP-assisted workers' cooperatives in Metro Cebu. PBSP helped expand sub-contracting partnership with six companies and continues to give technical, financial and marketing training to more than 3,000 skilled but marginalized workers.

Dual Training System

The demands of the tourism sector industry in Cebu require its workforce to be equipped with skills and competencies that meet the stringent world-class standards of the hospitality industry.

In partnership with the Technical Education Skills & Development Authority (TESDA) and the Banilad Center for Professional Development (BCPD), PBSP sponsored 58 scholars composed of urban poor young women to enroll in BCPD's Dual Training System Center.

Under this system, the young women are given holistic training in housekeeping, pantry, kitchen and other food and beverage services. Part of their schooling includes on-the-job training in allied hotels and restaurants where they get to be paid 75 percent of the minimum wage. Today, the scholars are gainfully employed in major hotels and restaurants in Cebu.

Another 50 out-of-school youth from PBSP's Area Resource Management Programs in Olango, Bohol and Cebu's Hillyland are being given Dual Training scholarships in electronics, light engineering, computer and machines operations in partnership with TESDA and skills training centers.

GEARING up for IT.

Lapu-Lapu Science and Technology Education Center

As the world is getting to be a small global village in the information age, curricula in educational institutions and public schools must also improve in line with technological advancement. Thus, PBSP has partnered with the Department of Education, Lapu-Lapu City Government and the business sector for inputs to draw up a curriculum that would meet the demands of information technology.

A product of this partnership is the Lapu-Lapu Science & Technology Education Center (LLCTEC), a model school that showcases an innovative and market-driven approach to education that puts equal emphasis on excellence in students' intelligence and emotional quotients. With assistance coming from Citigroup, Angelo King Foundation, Globe Telecom, PBSP provides scholarship and infrastructure support services to the school. Now its state-of-the-art computer and speech laboratories are fully functional.

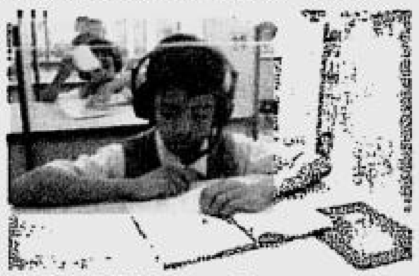
Management Training Institute

Another offshoot of the WDEP is the Management Training Institute (MTI) where crash courses are conducted for college graduates, employees and supervisors.

In consultation with the business sector, a short course was designed to enhance their managerial competence. The pilot class, composed of 38 trainees from 14 companies, met on Saturdays for nine months. The modules included values inculcation, budget and logistical management, interpersonal relations and effective communication.

The Coalition for Better Education

Through the efforts of PBSP Education Program Committee chairman and Aboitiz and Company Senior Vice President, Roberto E. Aboitiz, the Coalition for Better Education (CBE) was conceived under the aegis of the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, Inc. (RAFI) and the Aboitiz Group Foundation, Inc. (AGFI).


LAPU-LAPU Science & Technology Education Center

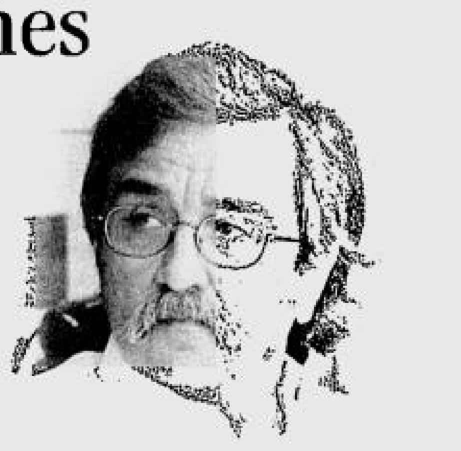
Envisioning itself to be the catalyst for responsive education, the coalition's primary mission is to bring together various education stakeholders to plan, facilitate, and promote a better education system responsive to the local and global needs. Dubbed as the first-of-its-kind in the country today, CBE seeks to address the major issues in education through policy analyses and by piloting the best practices in education.

Promoting a tri-sectoral approach, the coalition now duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission, has 100 listed members from 11 different sectors ranging from the academe, business, student, NGO, media and the government.

CBE is now concentrating on five major areas of concern: Teacher Training and Faculty Development, Academe-Industry-Government Linkage, Curriculum Development, Leadership and Governance, and Educational Community.

Dr. Ester Velasquez, CBE co-convenor and President of Cebu Normal University says, "I admire very much the laudable goals of CBE as it continuously looks into the enhancement and improvement of education in the province. I hope that others will follow the Cebu model so that it can be replicated in other areas."

through multi-sectoral partnership, poverty can be minimized, and genuine development can be attained. As Mr. Roberto Aboitiz aptly puts it, "We are getting rubber on the road. We are on the business of change. To do that, one can either do it alone or exponentially increase these things with the help of many."


ROBERTO E. Aboitiz leads the way for CBE.

CEBU Hillyland farmers

FURNITURE makers.

Long-Term Commitment to
Social Development

The Aboitiz Group Foundation, Inc. (AGFI) has committed itself to pursue its mission of helping people who want to help themselves. This commitment will be carried out by continuing its programs and projects to improve the quality of lives of its intended beneficiaries.

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A man's passion for uplifting people's lives

By Lina Sagaral Reyes

THE CIVIL society leader we are featuring here echoes a commitment that is deep, passionate and long lasting. It is at the core of Eddie Alih who epitomizes those who PBSP is working with as partners in implementing programs in the regions. He also represents a handful of leaders hard to find elsewhere. He is low profile, if not self-effacing, and yet possesses a brand of quiet charisma and a quieter dynamism. His is the leadership that builds trust and galvanizes the people to work together.

His first-born daughter hit the bull's-eye: passion becomes her father. Wearing several hats of responsibility as an academic and a civil society leader in Tawi-tawi, Eddie Alih exudes and seethes passion that both friend and stranger can easily discern in his every word and gesture.

This, coupled with his credibility among donor agencies as well as his capacity to articulate his people's vision in profound rhetoric, makes the guy loom imperial in the public imagination. Indeed, larger than life, much larger even than his barely five-foot-tall lean figure approaching you confidently in quick strides.

And mind you, he hasn't begun to expound on the tenets of leadership and peace-building in Mindanao yet, of his convictions on change and people's development, which he believes should always include every single soul on that southernmost island on the Philippine map, regardless of religion or ideological leanings.

Alih says this passion-packed lifestyle is a way of paying forward.

At five, he nearly drowned in the sea of Sitangkai, and the fisherman who found his floating body never thought he could still return to life but little Alih gasped for air and did breathe again and grew up mastering not only swimming lessons but also rural development planning.

"I've always asked why. Why am I still alive when I could have died young?" the chancellor at the Mindanao State University in Bongao, Tawi-tawi, now on his second term, wondered out loud.

"I think it is God's will that I survived. That's why I work hard to do many things. Life can be so short and there is so much to be done. I find fulfillment in helping others rise from poverty. And I will continue to serve them till I return back to the Creator," he said, somehow answering his own questions.

He does not mind the grueling routine required of developmental work. Like, in the past few days, he had survived through a gauntlet of meetings with potential donors, all too willing to invest in Tawi-tawi and all who saw in him a credible conduit of funds, someone who hums in the same wavelength.

"There are many projects in the offing for Tawi-tawi," he announced.

He talked seriously and at length about the prospects and benefits of solar energy and clean, accessible water systems for villages, community-based birthing clinics, adult literacy, low-cost housing, the latest technology for watermelons and other high-value crops planted by former rebels.

In all these endeavors, he serves as a link between the grassroots and donor agencies, like PBSP, as well as between academe-based researchers and the farmers and fishers who need new technologies.

Already the NGO he heads, the Muslim Upliftment Foundation of Tawi-tawi, Inc. (MUFTI) is PBSP's local partner in about eight of the 12 Tawi-tawi-based projects.

He repeats an oft-quoted vision, like a powerful mantra, for his province of more than 322,000 inhabitants: "We want Tawi-tawi to be a model of development for all the other Muslim provinces in Mindanao. We want them to be enlightened, to see what benefits can be reaped by the poor because the leaders choose peace over war."

But he still grieves the grief of someone strong and yet knows the strength emanated from the wellspring of support from someone now gone. He confesses he misses his wife Miraflor, the chemistry professor who had mothered his five children and claimed most of his dreams as her own. She died last October of cervical cancer. About her, he talks with intense passion, too, a pained look beclouding his boyish face.

To carry on her work in civil society, he and his daughters have established the Miraflor Alih Memorial Cancer Foundation. The Foundation will provide much-needed information drives on cancers that afflict particularly Moslem women as well as train medics for the cancer-stricken in the province.

What then is the lesson of a lifetime for passionate Mr. Eddie Alih? For him, the greatest challenge remains "in changing the perspectives and the collective esteem of a people, in making them believe in themselves."

"Because no amount of assistance can help them," he believes, " if they don't know how to do it themselves, if they don't believe they can accomplish much on their own."

PROF. Eddie Alih dedicates his second life to helping others rise from poverty.

CHEERFUL faces of Tawi-tawi kids.

RICH bounty from the sea.

The PBSP Western Batangas Agrarian Reform Communities Support Project

THE PBSP Western Batangas Agrarian Reform Support Project (WestBat) has undertaken the following initiatives as part of its mandate to support agrarian reform communities and contribute to the upliftment of the farmers' economic conditions and rural development in the target areas. The project is implemented in five municipalities namely Tuy, Calatagan, Lian, Calaca and Balayan. It is supported by the InterChurch Organization for Development Cooperation(ICCO) in partnership with the European Union.

Cooperative Building and Strengthening

Cooperatives within the Agrarian Reform Communities (ARCs) are small in terms of membership and capital. They also lack the required scale to participate and be competitive in the mainstream economy. Their consolidation into one primary cooperative is viewed as a viable strategy to attain economies of scale. The strategy to consolidate is carried out through continuous education and training of leaders and members, a reorientation of the organization to suit the upscaling needs of the cooperative, and gearing them up for business expansion. As such organizational management training for leaders, personnel and staff, advocacy, networking and linkaging form part of the modules to strengthen and build the capability of the ARC cooperatives.

Farm Productivity Development

The project has introduced farm technology in partnership with the Center for Rural Technology Development, the agricultural technology arm of PBSP. Leaders as well as members of the cooperatives within the ARCs are trained in agriculture-related technologies aimed at improving farm productivity and eventually increasing income for the farmers. Furthermore, the project has also linked these farmers to partner seed companies who provide technologies and seeds for cash crops and high yielding varieties of vegetables.

Marketing and Enterprise Development

A core objective of the project is to develop a viable cooperative enterprise within the ARCs. This is being done through continuous resource mobilization from among the members to ensure sustained operations. A key result area is the intensification of capital build-up activities and savings program and promotion of internally generated funds, instead of cultivating reliance on external sources. These targets are being complemented by the strengthening of the cooperative's business operations.

The ARCs are encouraged to engage in micro-enterprises utilizing the diverse crops that they produce. Several of these products have been developed and marketed under a single brand called **Batangan.**

Local Engagement

Our advocacy work focuses on getting the attention of decision makers especially the Department of Agrarian Reform. The WestBat experience in advocacy work ensures that officials of the government get first-hand information and sense of the actual situation of our areas/cases by letting them visit the sites and talk with the farmers so that they will be able to effectively decide on the merits of the cases involved.

Our being immersed in an area-based development work puts credibility on the issues that we raise and support because they are legitimate, objective and doable people's issues.

Another characteristic of our local advocacy work is putting importance on the role played by the local government units in giving credence to our issues since the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries are their constituencies, too. Therefore, their positions on specific issues as well as the support that they can extend reinforce our advocacy work in order to ensure results.

Building People's Organizations

Our community organizing work focuses on building organizations that shall serve as vehicles for articulating issues, concerns and strategic directions of ARBs. They also serve as a vehicle for effective and meaningful people's participation since people's organizations have become a very effective tool in advancing sectoral interests. Moreover, our people's organizations are organized to ensure the involvement of ARBs themselves in the two-fold pursuit of meeting community needs and basic services as well as dealing with strategic and more complex issues such as land tenure.

Policy Reform

Policy reform is a major concern of the WestBat program because it is inherent in the advocacy for improved/secured land tenure for ARBs. It is a fact that a considerable number of their issues could be traced to confusing policies and/or policy gaps, loopholes and overlaps. Furthermore, policy reform could also stem possible/future land tenure issues.

Our strategy, though still wanting in impact on the agrarian reform landscape, has proven to be effective in making a dent in the transformation of the participating communities.

A Trailblazing Partnership

Partnership has been a buzzword among NGOs, POs and the DAR for sometime now. The validity of and necessity for such partnerships have been proven by the WestBat ARC Support Project which has hastened the delivery of support services and mobilized the different stakeholders to achieve synergy in the implementation of an integrated area development program for ARCs.

Our community organizing work focuses on building organizations that shall serve as vehicles for articulating issues, concerns and strategic directions of ARBs.

A FIRM believer of Agrarian reform ploughs his land.

Education: The Gateway to Sustainable Peace & Development

An island of conflict and poverty, the land of promise that remains unfulfilled. These are but a few of the blurbs earned by Mindanao through decades of unrest and conflict. Amid the sound of helicopter gunships and gunshots, explosions reduce children's laughter to a frightened whimper, even until they reach the safety of evacuation centers where they suffer from diseases associated with these cramped shelters.

The state of education has dwindled since the outbreak of conflicts in Mindanao. It is a disturbing thought that children are the most affected, with a bleak future ahead of them.

These facts were culled from a study commissioned by PBSP to address the crisis that envelopes the future of Mindanao and its children - a future of poverty, a never-ending conflict, and a future of illiteracy.

PBSP responded to Mindanao's outcry with its new focus on education, urging the nation to help rebuild a new future for the land and its people.

"What we have to realize is that development is not just about infrastructure such as building roads and bridges, but also about human capacity improvement," PBSP Vice-Chair and Mindanao Committee Chair Paul G. Dominguez said in a presscon last year when PBSP revealed the results of the study.

PBSP's Catch-Up Plan seeks to strenghten education, "to bring the living standards in the poorer provinces in ARMM and SZOPAD on par with the more progressive areas in the region through the Mindanao Peace and Development Program (MPDP).

THE Mindanao Peace & Development Program (MPDP)

MPDP is a compendium of programs that intend to keep children in school where they rightfully belong. Not in the fields to help out their family or used as an armor in the battlegrounds.

MPDP is made up of various programs for functional and simple literacy, health, land tenure, income and productivity, and community building. The program aims to raise family incomes above the poverty level so that people will have better access to education and basic social services. MPDP is being implemented in the areas identified as those caught in a deeper crisis: the CARAGA Region, ARMM and SZOPAD particularly in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-tawi, Zamboanga del Norte, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao and North Cotabato.

"It is not difficult to create short term ceasefires to stop people from engaging in actual hostilities but these ceasefires will not be sustainable unless they lead to improved education standards, better livelihood, etc. so that the employment opportunities of the next generation are better, as well as the understanding of the issues and the need for peace and development is deepened precisely by the broader perspective that comes in," Dominguez said.

The program is made up of both "soft and hard infrastructures." The "soft infrastructure" consists of trainings, scholarships, school training assistance, project management, basic management and instructional supervision. Literacy classes for adults and support trainings for literacy facilitators, and also programs to keep children in school through supplemental feeding, de-worming and immunization are implemented through the soft infrastructure.

The hard infrastructure involves the physical aspect of the program: construction of school buildings, dormitories, laboratories and community libraries. There are also provisions for communication and information facilities such as television sets and video compact disks and players for educational programs.

One example is the Petron Schools, which PBSP helps by identifying venues for intervention and on-ground support. Through lessons in methods, tools and practices, Petron is helped to develop programs strategically and with the optimum impact to beneficiary communities. At the end of the day, this partnership leads to empowering these communities and enriching their lives.

Mustering Support

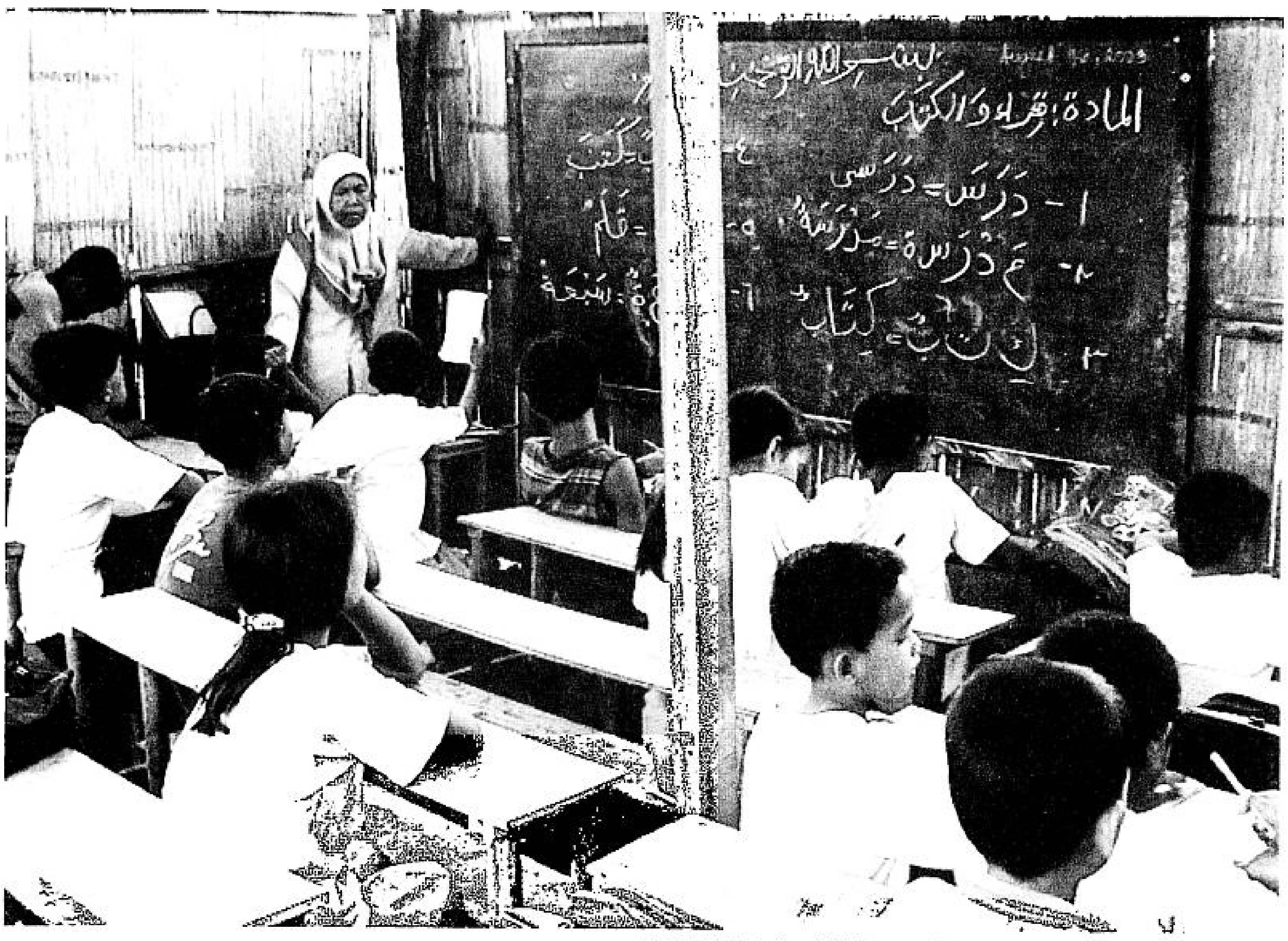
"All this is in augmentation of government efforts because we cannot take on the principal responsibility," Dominguez said.

After the initial campaign to focus attention to the crisis in education, PBSP has achieved substantial headway. Nine core groups and associations were organized to set up their own agenda and establish their operating systems in partnership with PBSP. Just recently, PBSP launched an affirmative action program to keep children in school through a comprehensive ten-month supplemental feeding and malnutrition program in an elementary school in Malapatan, Sarangani Province that saw the participation of several companies and NGOs. A significant achievement is the completion of 50 multi-grade schools constructed under the Little Red Schoolhouse Project of the Coca-Cola Foundation Philippines, Inc.

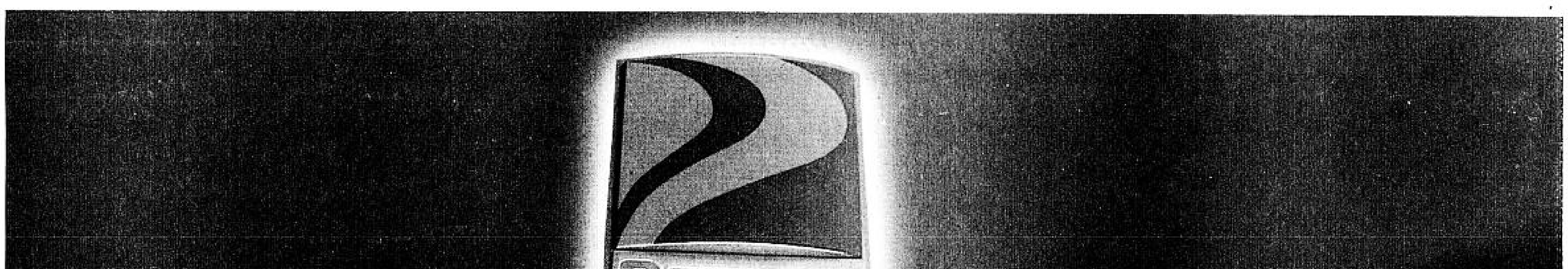
Headway in Education and Health

Since the implementation of the project, much has been done to help aid the education crisis in Mindanao. Assistance such as book and school supplies donation by Philam Foundation (through the Aid to Basilan Children Fund) has increased the number of students who are enrolled in schools. The program target for potable water in identified communities is 55.38% completed and one municipal and two barangay LGUs have contributed resources for health interventions.

Still, a lot remains undone and more helping hands are welcome. There are still numerous changes that need to be implemented and intervention is needed in answer to decades-long neglect and conflict. "I don't directly link education as a factor in terms of signing peace agreements. Rather, it is a factor to ensure that peace is sustainable," Dominguez said.



MINDANAO school children making the most of their simple amenities.



PETRON FOUNDATION

Service is in the heart of everything we do. Not only is this apparent in our products and services, but also in our employees' drive for public service. That's why we have the 17-year old motorist assistance program, LAKBAY ALALAY, and environmental projects like KONTRA KALAT SA DAGAT (coastal clean-up) and PUNO NG BUHAY (tree planting). And that's why we also support HABITAT FOR HUMANITY and LAKBAYANIHAN medical missions to communities across the country. All these borne out of a heartfelt desire to serve the Filipino. Pusong Pinoy

PETRON

Corporate volunteerism and the development of rural enterprise

SMALL and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in economic growth and sustainable development especially in developing countries like ours. Consider these figures: Our SME sector comprises 99.6 percent of all firms in the country. It employs 69.9 percent of the labor force and makes up 60 percent of all the exporters. This pretty much describes the reliance of our domestic economy on SMEs, which makes it very important that they are given assistance not only by the government but by non-government and private institutions as well.

The Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP) has recognized this need. Since the institution believes that intervention to SMEs should be both credit and technical, it has come up with programs which will assist entrepreneurs along these two approaches. PBSP's Small and Medium Enterprise Credit (SMEC) Program provides financial assistance to entrepreneurs in the countryside while its Corporate Volunteers for Enterprise Development (CVED) Program taps volunteers to extend expert advice to small-scale entrepreneurs that would lead to improvement in certain aspects of the business.

The SMEC Program has been helping countryside entrepreneurs for 13 years now. It is a wholesale lending program with thrift and rural banks as intermediary financial institutions for SMEs. So far, through the loans obtained by SMEC from Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau (KfW) of Germany and a grant originally from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), SMEs have accessed the SMEC funds since the program's conception in 1989.

Despite the lack of stimuli in the local economy, SMEC has lent a total of PhP138 million to SMEs engaged in light industrial manufacturing, agribusiness processing and trucking and hauling services. Spread out in all regions outside the of the National Capital Region, the program counts among its partners 24 intermediary financial institutions belonging to both the rural and thrift banking sectors. In anticipation of the economy going back on track, SMEC has embarked on enterprise support programs meant to beef up SMEs productivity and competitiveness in product packaging and labeling, cleaner production, workforce production and I.T. business application.

"The program illustrates how best economic and non-economic actors of society can work together under an environment of unity and clarity of purpose," explains Ramon del Rosario Jr., AB Capital chair and CEO, and PBSP trustee and co-chair of SMEC Project Implementation Committee. "When looking at the whole concept of globalization, we have to see what role SMEC can play in putting together safety net programs that will alleviate the adverse impact of this whole globalization thrust on the communities we work in," he says.

Offering business advisory services to SMEC is no new concept. What sets the CVED program apart is the use of employees from companies that comprise the membership of PBSP.

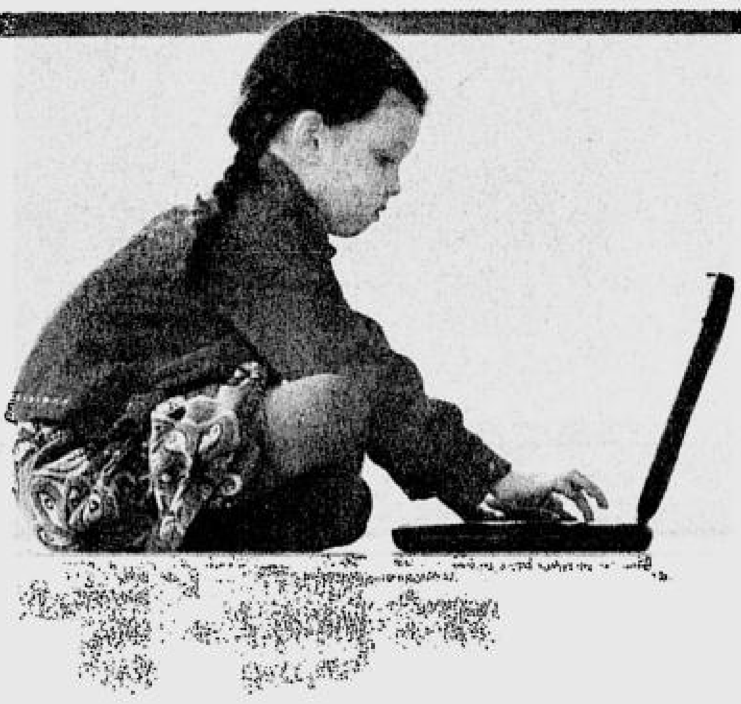
The Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO), with funding from the Canadian I Development Agency, is assisting PBSP on this program. It localizes CESO's mentoring scheme of providing volunteer business consultants.

Recruitment of volunteer advisers counts among the major activities. These advisers will be prepared for their assignments through a series of orientation on volunteerism and business counseling.

Another important part of CVED is the Client Advisory Services Delivery which builds upon the business problems diagnosed by both the enterprise and CVED and finds a suitable match from the roster of skilled professional volunteers. Workplans, which serve as a roadmap to lead the engagement, are then drawn up and applied by the enterprenuer to the business.

CVED will be piloted in Davao, Cebu, Bohol and Pampanga. Its scope shall be focused on manufacturing, agribusiness, food processing enterprises, information and communication technology (ICT) service providing, and tourism ventures.

PROMOTING Small and Medium Enterprises in the country.



WHAT'S NEXT

AFTER WALKING ON THE MOON?
AFTER SENDING PROBES TO THE EDGE OF OUR GALAXY?
AFTER MAPPING HUMAN DNA?
AFTER FITTING A CAMERA INTO A CAPSULE?
AFTER STORING GIGABYTES OF DATA ON A PINHEAD?
AFTER ATTACHING ROBOTIC LIMBS ON HUMANS?
AFTER COMPUTERS THAT CAN SIMULATE ODORS AND AROMAS?
AFTER CLONED SHEEP, ROBOTIC DOGS AND MECHANICAL FISHES?
AFTER GENETICALLY ENGINEERED TOMATOES, DOG TRANSLATORS AND ROBOTS THAT DO YOUR VACUUMING?
AFTER VOICE RECOGNITION, VIRTUAL KEYBOARDS AND A WIRELESS WEB?
AFTER CONTROLLING YOUR WHOLE HOUSEHOLD THROUGH YOUR PHONE?

WHAT'S NEXT AFTER WHAT'S NEXT?

Innovations will never end.
For as long as we are motivated by
the desire to improve human life.
That has been our motivation for 75 years.
And it has moved us to provide communication solutions
to achieve one purpose:
to make all Filipinos' lives better.
That is what's next.

75 years of providing communication solutions to all Filipinos.

PLDT 75 THINK AHEAD